SEVEN DAYS WITH GOD

Abraham Mitrie Rihbany

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BY

ABRAHAM MITRIE RIHBANY

Author of 'A Far Journey,' 'The Syrian Christ,' 'Wise Men from the East and from the West,' etc.

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INSCRIBED
TO MY INSPIRERS
THOSE WHOSE SUPREME QUEST IN LIFE
IS THE STUDY AND PRACTICE OF
SPIRITUAL TRUTH

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CHAPTER I

SPIRITUAL GEOGRAPHY

Some years ago a well-known American clergyman sojourned for a short time with a high type Hindu mystic in California. The brief companionship of those two seekers after divine truth proved mutually agreeable. To the clergyman from whom I heard the story, it was highly profitable. As he told me, it opened his eyes to many things in the realm of the spirit which he had not seen before.

One day, as the American divine stated, he asked his Eastern companion whether he was giving himself daily to lonely and deep spiritual meditation. The Oriental sage appeared greatly surprised. Looking at his Western friend meditatively, he answered, 'Here?' The severely brief, interrogative answer seemed to issue from the depth of a disappointed mind. The tone and manner of the Eastern visitor as he uttered it indicated unmistakably that the part of the world in which he then found himself was no suitable place for pious meditation.

That was by no means an intended slur on California. It was rather the spontaneous and honest reaction to the question of the mind of a man who first opened his eyes, grew up, made his peace with nature, and established his human relations, under other skies than those whose flowing depths hung over the land of his voluntary and temporary exile. The spell of the ancient East was thick upon him. The elements of his character were related to scenes and conditions in that world which strongly governed their operations. And it seemed that the mind of the Hindu mystic communicated its decisive attitude to the mind of his American friend with power and authority; for, as the latter told me, he agreed with him. It would seem strange that a spiritual thinker, who firmly clung to the precept that the Truth was universal and was accessible to the mind that sought it anywhere and everywhere in the world, should have set geographical limits to its divine manifestations. Strange also that a distinguished thinker should have allowed himself to believe that the Western world was off the course of the current of spiritual truth.

But this is an old story. Those familiar with the Old Testament will recall how for hundreds of years the people of Israel always looked to Mount Sinai as the seat of Jehovah. That flaming mountain of the 'south,' with its metallic barrenness, intense

light, weird solitude, and fearfully violent storms, remained to them the only source of divine revelation. For centuries they could not think of their God without his 'thunder.' That hereditary vision of the 'Mount of God' led the writer of Job to say, a millennium and a half after Moses, 'God thundereth marvelously with his voice.' In the land of their exile, the singers of the chosen people felt as the Hindu mystic did in California. To them Babylon was not the proper locality in which to sing one of the 'songs of Zion.' When by the rivers of Babylon they sat and wept, they hung their harps upon the willows and refused to make melody. For, as the Psalmist cries, 'How shall we sing Jehovah's song in a foreign land?' It was long before Israel discovered the richer content of the song which says, 'Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there.'

The psychology of such cases is normal. It is also unoffensive, provided it does not involve the tendency on the part of a foreigner to cast reflection on the land of his temporary sojourn.

For, as many of us who have been transplanted into a foreign land realize, in such cases as the one before us, it is the strangeness rather than the spiritual barrenness of an alien race which diverts

one's mind from intensive spiritual thinking. It is the foreigner's keen consciousness of the new world and the new life in which he finds himself immersed — strange social manners, domestic habits, commercial relations, idioms of speech, and the like — that keep him bewilderingly in the outer world. I very much doubt whether a person who immigrates to a country after he is thirty ever will be able so to adjust himself to its customs and manners as to take them for granted and wholly escape their startling challenge. Here the tone of life may not be hostile; still it is strange to that which time and nature have so securely wrought into the structure of one's mind in those mysteriously impressionable and tender years of life. The clash of the new with the old grows less sharp with the years, but, except in the case of youthful immigrants, it never drops below the threshold of consciousness.

I do not wish at this point to make a comparative estimate of the spirituality of the East and that of the West. Here I wish to state that the difference between these two worlds with reference to this subject, which no doubt exists, has been greatly and falsely exaggerated. In the minds of millions of Easterners as well as Westerners the idea that the West is spiritually barren has become a fixed and, certainly, injurious dogma. To such despairing philosophers, the 'mechanical' West appears like a

heap of junk. Its life is strong, but possesses neither sweetness nor light. Its atmosphere is acrid with the fumes of factory oil and utterly hostile to spiritual thinking. Its noisy life finds its retreat at heavily laden dinner tables and the reading of commercial statistics and football news. What religion it has it has borrowed from the East and made a very poor use of it. Its aggressiveness in seeking material wealth is mercilessly wearing out its nerves and driving it toward a speedy destruction. It was, no doubt, something like this view of the West which led the American clergyman fully to agree with his Hindu friend that California and, impliedly, the Western world at large, was no place for spiritual meditation. I do not at all think he should have so agreed. Nor do I think that the above diagnosis of Western life, which no doubt contains much truth, is wholly correct. I am an Oriental by birth and early training, and, to a considerable extent, a mystic. I retain affectionate remembrances of the East and am glad to keep in touch with its life and thought. It is as regards its fundamental instincts a spiritual world and the chief home of mysticism. But, on the other hand, my continuous residence for more than thirty years in the West as a student of its institutions convinces me that its life is not so barren spiritually, nor that it lives religiously entirely on borrowed bread.

In my other publications[1] I did not refrain from pointing out what seemed to me to be the defects of Western civilization; nor do I feel like shirking such a duty in the present volume. But I deem it also my legitimate duty to confess and proclaim the fact that, as one whose youth was cast in an Oriental mould, I find human life in the West to rest on the same everlasting arms which sustain the inner life of man everywhere in the world. The same undertones which thrill the deeps of the human soul in the East do their beneficent work also in the inner life of man in the West. Below the shallow stratum of the machinery with which the Westerner deals are the spiritual values by which he lives. He also derives from the Parent-Life.

There can be no doubt, as it seems to me, that the verdict which so many have returned against the West has been largely due to a misunderstanding of the reality of life in both the East and the West. Here the difference in mentality, the method of procedure, and the degree of attainment, have to a great extent shaped the judgment of those who consider these two worlds to be spiritually alien to each other. Easterners in general have acquired an incorrect understanding of the word 'materialism,' and Westerners in general an incorrect notion of the

[1] See especially my book, *Wise Men from the East and from the West.*

word 'mysticism.' To the former, whoever traffics with the outer world is a greedy materialist, and to the latter, whoever acquires the habit of retiring from the rush and noise of daily life and giving himself periodically to spiritual meditation is a self-pleasing mystic. He is a non-productive member of the human family. The sweet word 'mysticism' has become as unpopular in the West as the word 'materialism' in the East.

And what is still more disturbing is the fact that this difference in judgment has become more than a superficial intellectual theory. It has acquired a deep moral significance. If my own observations, covering many years, are correct — as I have sufficient reason to think that they are — I am led to believe that there are millions of well-intentioned Americans who think, somewhat uncomfortably, that the mystic tones of life which give it its sweetness and light are beyond the hearing of Westerners. To them the East is the only holy of holies where such music is heard. It seems of no use trying to strike such chords in the West; the noises of the external life drown them. There is some truth in this diagnosis, but by no means the whole truth. What truth there is here is no sufficient foundation for the conclusion drawn from it. Many Westerners will be surprised to find that, in spite of all the clatter and noise of life around them, in spite of all

their alertness and aggressiveness in the commercial and industrial world, the things which make life for them worth living, their friendships sweet, and their homes dear, are those invisible, intangible values which form the mystical core of religion. They will find that they have an inward life which knows no East nor West, but is their own inheritance from the Eternal Spirit; that they have no real reason to say, as I have heard many say, 'Our mind is hopelessly materialistic; our type of life is not at all fit for deep spiritual culture'; and similar disheartening and untrue things.

No greater calamity can befall a person than to be spiritually a defeatist at heart. No heavier liability can weigh down civilization than those members of society who are confirmed spiritual defeatists. Whatever obstacles there may be in the way, never permit yourself to lose confidence that the conquering Spirit is within you. It can still the harsh noises of life whenever you want them to be stilled, and restore you to the higher fellowship of the sons and daughters of peace. The same Spirit of Being which moved the ancient Oriental writer to speak to the ages is saying now, 'The commandment which I command thee this day, it is not too hard for thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, and make us

to hear it, that we may do it? Nor is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, and make us to hear it, that we may do it? But the word is nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.'[1]

That the West is preëminently the world of commerce and industry, that it is giving more of its thought and strength to these things than it should, and that its dominant religion is of Eastern origin, are well-recognized and indisputable facts. But that because of this it is legitimate to conclude that religion is an external attachment to the Western mind, and that commerce and industry are of no spiritual value whatsoever, is a wild assertion. When one thinks of the great religious institutions in the Western world, of its vast missionary enterprises, of its great preachers of religion and its spiritual poets and essayists, one is bound to conclude that beyond its visible activities an invisible spiritual world exists which is native to its own genius. Had its borrowed religion been entirely foreign to its mind, it never could have so effectively responded to its appeal. Spiritual things can only spiritually be discerned. They can be known and owned only through deep spiritual affinity with their essential nature. It was most natural that the

[1] Deut. xxx, 11.

ancient East should discover the fundamentals of religion before Western civilization came into being, and most natural that the youthful West should borrow its Scriptures from the East. It must be admitted also that, at least because of its longer age, the East has acquired a firmer hold on those eternal realities than the West has. Yet, the conclusion is unescapable that the relation between these two worlds is more than that of a giver and a recipient. It is rather that of spiritual kinship and identity of desire for the hidden satisfactions of the soul. The borrower, through what he has received, seems to recognize the fact that he is not a mere beneficiary, but a fellow heir with the lender, of the deeper visions of faith and hope.

In no other way can justice be done both the East and the West, in relation to this subject, than through the sincere and generous recognition of this fact.

CHAPTER II

MISCONCEPTIONS OF EASTERN LIFE

COMPLIMENTARY and uncomplimentary misconceptions of a people's life, whether by those of its own children, or by aliens, is a general human weakness. This is often done without the intention either to extol or to malign, but is due to a lack of sufficient knowledge of the facts. Nor are such unenlightened judgments to be charged only to aliens. Not infrequently the most misleading of the interpreters of a people's life are those of its own household.

It is obvious that not every American can be trusted to give a correct presentation of American life, and the same may safely be said of Englishmen, Frenchmen, and others as interpreters of the modes of life and thought in their respective countries. In fact, only a small minority of any people can be safely followed as exponents of that people's life. In a similar manner we may speak of 'traveled' persons. The mere fact that a person has traveled, or even lived in a foreign country for a 'long time,' is not necessarily a sufficient guaranty that his observations of its life activities and their underlying motives are correct; nor that his conclusions are sound. It all depends upon who the traveler is and what his interests in his travels are.

Here are two simple examples. In more than one instance I have been asked with much surprise by some Americans — some of whom had traveled in my native land — why I refrain from drinking coffee, that is, from drinking as much as they thought I ought to drink. 'Your people,' the statement often is, 'live on coffee. How does it come that you are so abstemious?' Now the fact is that, while the aristocrats of Syria and some of the commoners drink coffee daily, the rank and file of the people seldom indulge in such a luxury. Only on festive occasions and when a family has guests, coffee is served. The same applies to the use of wine. The second instance illustrates the idea some Westerners have of the spiritual life of the East. At the close of a meeting at which I had spoken on the social life of the East, a lady said to me, 'I was much surprised to hear you describe the joyous social life the Easterners live. I had thought they did nothing but meditate on spiritual things.'

I have no intention to undertake in this publication a comparative study of the East and the West. I have attempted that in my other publications. Here I shall touch upon this interesting subject only to the extent to which I deem it necessary to pave the way for the message which the present volume is intended to carry.

The fact that the East is the original home of all

the great religions is well known to all thinking people in both the East and the West. The ages in which these religions were born and brought to maturity — a time long antedating the birth of the Western nations — were periods in which introspection and mystical meditation bloomed in a favorable atmosphere. The slowness of progress tended to make earthly things seem unchangeable. The tyranny of rulers and the cruelty of man to man established the conviction that a life of joy and peace must be sought not without, but within and above. To find that beneficent, serene, eternal Reality by way of inward seeking, even to be absorbed by It, was the only wise course for the children of men. The road may be rough, the journey long, the pains many. Yet all these are the throes of a new birth into an eternal order, eternally good. True life is to be found only in the Soul of Being; all else is corruptible and transient. To lose one's life, or what he calls his life, in the eternal deep of the All is to find it. There can be no dual existence, God's existence and man's existence. God is all. Man comes actually into real being when he enters into the life of God. This tangible world, the world of desires and ambitions, is more like a prison than a home. To be attached to it is to be in bondage. Only that which is eternally real — which this world is not — is fit to be the home of

the Soul. Nor must the seeker after the Truth give himself to explaining this world, scientifically or otherwise. It is not to be explained, but to be explained away. The seeker's objective must be the Reality which is beyond all visible things. That, once grasped, includes all values. So long as Self is conscious of the desire to possess, whatever the nature of the thing sought may be, it is in bondage and is full of anxiety and fear. Self, so understood, must go. It will remain a perplexed wanderer until it is possessed by the Soul of Being. The way to this supreme bliss is the inward way.

This attitude toward spiritual reality is more characteristic of eastern than of western Asia. The evolution of the Jewish-Christian religion followed a somewhat different course, and, as will be later explained, the mode of practice of this religion differs considerably from that of the Far East. Nevertheless, the later tendencies of the Jewish-Christian religion, such as the longing for 'the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,' the desire on the part of the believer not to live himself, but to have Christ live in him, and the belief that the visible order of things was destined to be destroyed and give way to a permanent spiritual order, touch the borderland of the profounder mysticism of the Far Eastern religions.

Thus, then, whatever value may be attached to

this brief explanation, or any other, the fact remains that the Eastern mind is the chief discoverer of religious truth. Be the cause of this the very long and somewhat static history of man in the East, a strong spiritual tendency inherent in him to be introspective, or any other cause or combination of causes, the Easterner was first to sound the profoundest depths of the religious consciousness. Time and scholarship will, no doubt, discredit much of what this ancient man thought was unshakable truth. They will do away with the immense mass of superstitions which have grown around the central truths of his religion like choking weeds and thistles; they will cleanse his ritual of its enervating voluptuousness; they will rid him of self-inflicted torture as an act of devotion, and of caste as a social distinction. All this and more will the critical processes of modern scholarship do for the son of the East. Yet, after the fire of criticism has consumed all the dross which clings to the golden truths of the religions of the East, the residue will emerge with a fresh splendor and will be owned by both the East and the West as the precious heritage of the human soul.

Nevertheless, the Easterner is charitably misjudged by many in the West, as he is uncharitably misjudged by others. The idea that all the Easterners are spiritually minded is, of course, incorrect.

To suppose that those hundreds of millions of Asiatics are given constantly to meditation on the law of the Most High is benevolently to misjudge them. The Easterner as a type is more religious than the Westerner. Yet the fact remains that the hardest task of the prophets of the East has been successfully to lead the rank and file of their people to the fountain-head of pure spiritual truth. On the other hand, the assertions of those 'advanced thinkers' of the West, to whom the inward spiritual life is a jungle of confused dreams, that the Eastern religions are merely a 'mass of myths and legends,' are unworthy of serious attention. It is not infrequently that retrogression is mistaken for progress.

Once I heard a man, a so-called 'liberal' preacher, say to an assembly of people, 'We are done with Asiatic religions; we are through with the Bible of the Hebrews. Let us have a modern American religion.' Yea and amen! Let us! This is a very laudable ambition, although the said speaker, who represents a type, did not say what sort of 'modern religion' he had in mind. But let us, before we let go of the 'Bible of the Hebrews,' and, by the way, of the Christians also, be sure that we have something better than the best that Old Book contains, or at least as good, to take its place. Let us not be like the dog in the fable who dropped the bone in order to grasp the shadow of it.

Let us first be sure that our 'modern mind' actually feels the irresistible urge of a new spirit of religious prophecy whose truths exceed in their purity and helpfulness those which we find in the ancient Scriptures. Such, for example, as, 'Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil; for thou art with me. What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden parts thou wilt make me to know wisdom. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Blessed are the pure in heart. Blessed are the peace makers. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness. Love one another. Love your enemies. Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart. Love thy neighbor as thyself. Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them. The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, self-control. Overcome evil with good. Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are

honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.'

Now, I do not mean to assume the position of a special pleader for the Bible. For I am inclined to believe that if we can so readily evolve a 'modern religion' whose precepts shall touch human life at more points and more beneficently than those of the old Scriptures, we will bless the world from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, as it never was blessed before. However, I think it would be much wiser for us to give those old precepts an honest and fair trial in actual life before we cast them as rubbish to the void. For otherwise we might not be able to replace them very profitably to ourselves and those who shall come after us.

But this should not be understood to mean that the Western mind is spiritually destitute. For the evidence is clear that the West has not been a mere recipient, but a creative borrower of Eastern religion. Its interpretation of religion, especially in literature, hymns, and poetry in general, has given religious truth fresh significance and placed it within easy reach of the masses. It has also moralized religion to a greater extent than the East has. It is true that the Western mind has not discovered

new religious truths. This, however, cannot be justly ascribed to spiritual sterility. The probability is that the need for a native religious system was not so pressing in the West, because the rich and vital religions of the East, especially Christianity, were ready for the Western peoples to adopt and make their own. What otherwise would have been necessary to evolve had already been brought into being. Just as the East is to-day adopting the discoveries of the West in the field of science, so did the West adopt the discoveries of the East in the field of religion. Its task, therefore, has been to restate and interpret those ancient systems of religion so as to make them fit its own mentality and serve its own peculiar needs. The struggle in this field never was more strenuous than it is to-day. The Old and the New are face to face in the field of honor. The one is armed with the venerable idea of fixity and certainty, the other with that of movement and inquiry. To which is the battle? To neither. It is neither to the Old because of its age, nor to the New because of its youth. The selective processes of experience and of constructive criticism will bring together whatever is true, good, and beautiful in both systems, and thus make of the twain one new order which shall possess both the stability of age and the progressiveness of youth. The future belongs to that form of thought which

possesses spiritual health and belongs to it only so long as it has that quality. In the religious sphere, as in any other, sacredness inheres in usefulness, and sanctity in utility.

Nor is this sifting and overturning any longer an exclusively Western mode of thought and action. The once static East is now being agitated by the spirit of doubt and inquiry. The old foundations do not seem to be eternally fixed as they once did. Modern knowledge — a Western importation — is beginning to reveal defects and weaknesses in the structure of those ancient foundations and the necessity for their reconstruction. Because of this, however, the East is not being Westernized, although the automobile, the telephone, and the airship are beginning to replace its picturesque, romantic caravans. But it is being slowly transformed into a new East.

Its religious mind, with which we are chiefly concerned here, is beginning to experience the invasion of doubt and agnosticism which modern education has caused in the West. The intelligent classes in the East are beginning to experience real dissatisfaction with their inherited forms of religious faith and to express that dissatisfaction with a new courage. Of course such modes of thought are not entirely new to that part of the world, but are charged with a new spirit of individualism. All of

which reveals the interesting fact that, notwithstanding its profound depth, the religious tendency of the Oriental is not beyond the reach of change. In Japan, for an example, where progress along Western lines has gone farther than in any other Eastern country, the departure of the new generation from the religious ways of the fathers has been most alarming to the loyal adherents of the old order. This fear has by no means been abated by the consequent social and political changes which make it seem that the dignity of the institutions of ancient Japan is being seriously impaired. Nor have the educated classes of India been able to escape the spell of the West, even though many of them hate it. They may, as many of them do, curse the 'Western barbarians'; nevertheless, their speech, their views of the past and the future, their adoption of modern machinery and means of transportation, and other things characteristic of Western life, all indicate that their progress is proceeding along lines somewhat parallel to those of Western progress. They may succeed in resisting the forces which tend completely to Westernize them; they may, as they hope, achieve such triumphs in the field of scientific knowledge as to leave the West far behind them, as it was behind them centuries ago; they may succeed in doing all these things and still remain Hindus. Nevertheless, the indications are

that this very progress from which they hope so much is gradually making them different Hindus from what their fathers were and from what their orthodox leaders wish them to be, and bringing them dangerously close in thought to those 'Western barbarians.' The only safe course for them here, if they wish to resist change, is to leave Western science and industry alone. But can they?

The Mohammedan world also is in a state of ferment. A considerable section of the upper stratum of Moslem thought is being agitated by the forces of modern knowledge. And, while what has already taken place does not warrant generalization on a vast scale, still it is of the utmost significance. In the region of thought referred to, doubt about certain forms of religious faith, heretofore considered valid and sacred, is no longer feared as a mortal sin. It is rather courageously faced as the way to a larger and more enlightened faith than that 'once delivered to the saints.'

The encroachments of the Western nations upon the world of Islam, and the calamities which more recent years brought upon the whole world, have served as a negative incentive for this awakening. The positive and more fruitful incentive, however, has been the intimate contact of many of the leaders of Moslem thought with the West as seekers of knowledge. The first set of circumstances which

has disorganized many Moslem governmental institutions, and threatened to place the destiny of Moslems in other hands than their own, has also awakened a deep sense of humiliation in those millions and thrown them back upon their own resources. The second set of circumstances which has brought Moslem leaders face to face with the new forces of modern knowledge, and new methods of organization vastly superior to the old, has also convinced those leaders that, if they are to win victories of progress under their own banners, they must have these new weapons. They have come to look upon their old theology, which in many respects belongs to a semi-nomadic past, as a serious impediment to their advancement.

Turkey has already separated the Church from the State and made religion a personal concern. Women, at least in the great cities like Constantinople and Smyrna, have discarded the veil and the harem and taken up Western modes of life. The historical study of religious lore is being undertaken, although in a hesitating manner. This recalls the timid beginnings of such research in the Christian world. As a result of this, doubt and indifference to accustomed religious practices are manifesting themselves, even in the pious, ancient East. And these disturbing changes are even more pronounced in thousands of Easterners of all faiths

who are in Europe and the Americas. Like many of their new neighbors, they are out of touch with religious influences, or 'unchurched.'

What is of deep significance for us here, in our study of the religious tendencies of the East and the West, is this modification, under the influences of modern knowledge, of the Eastern mind, which has been supposed to be beyond the reach of such change. It would seem that, if the present religious restlessness among the intelligent classes of the East continues to receive the support of modern education, the pot will not be calling the kettle black for very long. The East will not be saying to the West, 'I am holier than thou'; and California will not be more unfit for spiritual meditation than is India. And the supposition that the Easterner will remain purely a spiritual mystic, regardless of environment, is not borne out by the facts.

Yet, to those who are in intimate touch with the movements of religious thought in the modern world, there is no cause for despair. So far as mankind in its totality is concerned, religion is not subject to death. It is itself life and immortality. What we need to realize is that, while transition from one mode of thought to another is not wholly modern, the age in which we are living is preeminently an age of transition. Our ancestors did experience many changes, else they could not have

passed from barbarism to civilization and from religions of savage fear to religions of faith, hope, and love. So in the present age similar readjustments are being made, but much more rapidly and on a vaster scale than in the unscientific ages of the past. We are straining toward more reasonable statements of religion and a higher spiritual level. No doubt we shall arrive. The soul will not permanently surrender its deeper spiritual interests, nor accept the formulas of the intellect in lieu of those profounder mystic tones which cheer its solitude. The 'mechanical' West — if the signs of the times are not altogether illusive — will not remain so forever; it cannot. The 'superstitious' East also must experience in its own way the changes of this tumultuous age, but I have no fear that it will lose its own soul. A new day is coming to both these worlds which shall bring them closer together, without either of them losing its identity. But no one should expect them to use the very same method in their spiritual or social progress. As we shall see in the following chapter, the method of approach to spiritual reality cannot be the same to the Eastern mind as to the Western mind, at least for centuries to come. But, each progressing in its own way, they are bound, in process of time, to find and hold fast the things which cannot be doubted, and to doubt the things which cannot be believed.

CHAPTER III

THE INWARD WAY

The common belief that the Oriental spiritual seeker follows the inward way, and the Occidental seeker the outward way, is only partly correct. The real truth is that both seekers follow the inward way; the difference between them is that of degree and not of kind. He who lives exclusively in the outer world — if such a human really exists — is no spiritual seeker at all. In the realm of the spirit the minds of men cannot be so definitely divided into esoteric and exoteric, introverted and extroverted. Spiritual values are never external objects; they are those things which are 'spiritually discerned.'

Scholars tell us that the mind never deals with things as they are, but with its own conceptions of them. Whether a man is studying the activities of the human mind, the formation of continents, the structure of the atom, the making of shoes, or the baling of hay, he can deal only with his own ideas of these things and not with their real being. No doubt to the majority of men this is a very mystifying theory; nevertheless it is correct. We can be conscious of things only through the states of mind they awaken within us, such as joy, sorrow, fear,

wonder, exaltation, humiliation, love, hatred, selfishness, altruism, satisfaction or dissatisfaction of whatever sort. None of these realities is an external object, and it is by them that we live. So, when we say the Western mind deals with external things, we do not touch its spiritual interests. These are never external anywhere in the world. The Westerner deals with external things much more extensively than the Easterner does, but he also finds his real life in his inward retreats — if he finds it at all.

Therefore, as I have already stated, the difference between the Easterner and the Westerner in seeking the true life is a difference of method and degree, and not of kind. There can be but one spiritual life, one true life, for all mankind. The characteristics of this life are portrayed in all the scriptures and other great literatures of the world. Its true possessors recognize one another wherever they meet, as members of the same communion.

But the difference in method and degree is important and calls for serious consideration.

Ultimately every religious mode of thought or every religion must be judged at every stage of its development by its chief exponents and practicers. It is not sufficient to judge a religion by its influence upon the 'common man.' The inability of the common man fully to understand and practice the religion he professes disqualifies him from being the

standard by which the breadth and potency of his religion should be judged. He is useful in this regard only in so far as his experience is validated by the judgment of his teachers. The peace and comfort he may derive from his religion may not indicate that he understands it, nor that they are due to the influence upon him of the vital truths of that religion. Belief in a superstition may be very comforting to one who is ignorant of its real character. So, it seems to me, the right way to judge what would happen if the precepts of a religion were universally practiced is to see what fruits they bear in the lives of those who best understand and faithfully practice them.

To speak of religion as purity of heart and the highest expression of truth and love, and to say that if all men were in this sense religious this world would be a paradise, is to speak a universal language. To such a conception of religion the heart and the mind everywhere gladly give their assent. And it is this view of religion which makes those who see everything but the difficulties wonder — often indignantly — why men do not banish all sectarianism and form together one and only one household of faith. But, for an example, when an Occidental is called upon to practice religion as an Oriental does, and *vice versa*, then a serious divergence of opinion arises. The method and philosophy

of the one seem to the other to rob life of its zest and meaning, and to make spiritual endeavor seem as 'striving after wind.' Here is a striking illustration of this divergence.

In a recent piece of writing, more akin to poetry than to prose, an American-educated Hindu, Dhan Gopal Mukerji, speaks of his visit to the 'Holy One of Benares.'[1] 'What brings you here?' asked the Holy One. 'Problems, my Lord.' 'Problems?' he questioned — then laughed. 'Thou hast acquired the Western habit of worrying and running the Universe. Whose Universe is it, thine or Brahma's? If it is his, why not look for Him and find out what He wants of it?'

Referring to a near-by hospital the visitor asked, 'But, Master, why have you this institution? Why have a hospital right in the midst of a sanctuary of meditation? . . . Why a hospital, and a day clinic as well? How did you come to have them here?' 'My son,' answered the Holy One, 'it is the punishment for doing good. Go, change thy dress and come back to my chamber. I will explain it to thee.' The explanation was that a sick man had some years before come to where the Sage was. He fell sick, and the Sage took care of him until he recovered. The man went forth and spread the news abroad. As a result, many other sick folk came to the Holy One

[1] *Atlantic Monthly*, August, 1924.

to be healed. 'It was a blinding shower,' said the Seer. 'I saw in it a terrible snare: beyond a doubt, I felt, if I went on taking care of the sick, by and by I should lose sight of God. Pity can be a ghastly entanglement to those who do not discriminate, and there I stood, with a wall of sick men between me and God. . . . Beware, beware: good can choke up the soul as much as evil.'

'But,' asked another visitor, 'if some one does not do it, how will good be done?' 'Live so,' replied the master, 'that by the sanctity of thy life all good will be performed involuntarily. My children, do not *try* to do good. Live like the holy man, my whilom teacher, the air-eater; live so that evil will not dare come near where you live, and all the good will be accomplished of itself. For, as a scavenger removes dirt and constantly watches out lest the dirt infect him with disease, so the doer of good lives in perpetual fear of his soul being diseased with the evil he carts away from the house. He does not know into what danger the routine of good work can plunge his God-seeking soul. The pestilence of improving others may kill his spirit. Try the safer way — live so that by your living all good deeds will be done unconsciously.'

Here we have a very striking example of the method of an inward seeker after God. It is neither needful nor absolutely safe to try to give his words

a fuller interpretation than they give of themselves to any person of normal intelligence. It is the common experience of religious writers that to interpret another's religious views is rarely free from danger. If your interpretation of the tenets of his faith prove uncongenial to him, he can easily charge you with ignorance — you do not understand him. When the picture of one's features does not harmonize with one's opinion of himself, then the photographer is to blame; he is not a 'first-class artist.' Needless to say, however, that the danger of going astray in trying to interpret the tenets and the practices of any given faith is not altogether a fancy. That elusive 'more' of religion, which words never can adequately express, is the source of the difficulty. Nevertheless, it is not an infrequent thing that the dissatisfaction of a devotee of a faith, with the interpretation of it by one that is alien to it, reveals the ignorance of the devotee rather than the interpreter. In their interpretation of one another's minds, Easterners and Westerners often come into conflict.

But the words of the 'Holy One' quoted above seem too clear to be misunderstood, and they reveal the deepest spiritual yearning of the ancient East. The way to God is the inward way. If you have God, you have every good thing; if you do not have God, you have nothing. Therefore, do not be en-

tangled with outward things; their possession is but labor and sorrow.

It is fair to say here that this view of the spiritual life is not altogether strange to religious history in the West. Many of the mediæval Christian mystics lived in the inward holy of holies and treated the flesh and the world much as do the Oriental mystics. Nor is this ideal of life without its ardent devotees in the West to-day. The seekers of the 'Ancient Wisdom' of the East are not a few in present Western society. But the West as a whole has been led away from that intense concentration upon the inward life by tendencies peculiar to itself. Even in those periods of mediæval history when mysticism was highly esteemed as an evidence of holiness and the noblest expression of true religion, civic endeavor and other good deeds were considered among the highest duties of spiritual seekers.

At the present time the 'social gospel' is, as is well known, the enchanter of almost all the religious bodies in the Western world, especially in America and England. The faith of the Gospel is being objectified in a host of organizations whose purpose is the amelioration of the many ills which afflict society. And while the inward life is by no means wholly neglected, the service of man is considered the highway to God and the fulfillment of the Royal Law. Social reform, prison reform, in-

dustrial readjustments, the building of modern hospitals and asylums, and many other means of social, industrial, and political betterment — the very things against which the Hindu sage and his true disciples warn all seekers after God — engage the attention of churches and other religious organizations. These Westerners seem to consider the universe to be theirs as much as it is God's, and to be endeavoring to help God make it the best universe possible. They would direct the functions of the glands of the body, the cells of the brain, and the 'complexes' of the mind (whatever these may be). They would chase the microbes off the face of the earth, banish sickness and want and sorrow from the world, and make man a real owner and subduer of the earth. To go about doing good is to them not a hindrance to spiritual progress, but a noble evidence of it. They would not be 'Oriental dreamers' living on terms of amity with filth and want and disease, and seeking to forget such miseries through religious intoxication.

It is not inconceivable that after the Westerner has, like his Eastern elder brother, put something like a hundred centuries of history behind him, he also will come to see the futility of all human endeavor to perfect this fleeting world. It is not impossible that if he is granted life and length of days, he will be weary of his many devices and will seek

peace for his jaded soul in the softer light of the inward sanctuary. But at present this supposition is far from hopeful. The youthful Westerner disdains quietism; he feels the urge of his abundant vitality and is inhospitable to restraining advice. He is optimistically willing to face the risks of a progress achieved by his own efforts. The outer world is his field, and the doing of good as he understands it is religion in action. To him inward brooding is the way of escape from life's duties, which cannot be fully acceptable to God. 'Christian, rise, and act thy creed, let thy prayer be in thy deed,' is a very popular song with him.

At the same time, and notwithstanding the example quoted above, the fact must not be ignored that doing good is no alien conduct to the Orientals. Buddhism enjoins it. 'Take upon yourself some duties that will exercise your abilities and make you useful to your fellow men' is one of Buddha's commands. But the supreme insistence of Buddhism is on character and wisdom — that wisdom which eventuates in complete emancipation from desire, and whose characteristics are purity, universal love, and calm insight into the truth. Only the working of this type of wisdom will destroy the 'weeds of illusion' and lead to Nirvana, the end of all desire and of all sorrow.

It seems to me useless for any one to undertake

to determine which is right, the Oriental 'quietist' or the 'busy' Occidental. The verdict in such a case might be of worth if it could be obtained from a jury composed of qualified men drawn from both factions in equal numbers — a possibility not easy of realization. But even if such a thing could be done, the deliberations of the jury, I believe, would end without the desired result, not because of partisan feeling, but from 'inability to reach a verdict.' For a right decision here requires nothing less than knowledge of the purpose of our existence in this world. What are we here for? Have we come into this world to build up what we call a civilization, a social order of free, educated, well-fed and well-clothed men; are we here to build great cities, establish vast industries and commercial enterprises, to combat disease and want, and to harness the forces of nature and make them our unrequited toilers? Or, on the other hand, are we here for the sole purpose of looking upon this world as a delusion and a snare, and passing from it by way of mystical contemplation into reunion with the Eternal, even though such a reunion should mean the dissolution of our own personality? If so, why have we come through this world at all? Who is so wise as to give us the correct answer to these questions?

Let us, therefore, content ourselves with the dis-

cussion of less difficult matters. Both the Easterners and the Westerners who are spiritually minded believe that human life has a higher purpose than all human endeavor in this world seems able to realize. Something higher and holier is to be revealed in us in the spheres of being we hope yet to traverse, beyond what we call death. As to that holiness of life whose characteristics are love and service and the seeking of spiritual truth, it is the common heritage of all the great religions. Yet it seems fairly certain that the conception of life and the methods of religious practice of the Far East, taken in their totality, never will fit the mentality of the West. For good or evil the attachment of the Westerner to personal existence, here and hereafter, is intense and ineradicable. Personality, active and forever fully conscious of itself, sums up for him the essence of being. The Brahman's reabsorption in the ALL, and the Buddhist's Nirvana, are to him annihilation pure and simple. The apologists for Buddhism, both in the East and the West, realizing how objectionable the thought of annihilation is to the general mind of the West, are endeavoring to make out that the state of Nirvana is not annihilation. That it is so only with regard to personality as the seat of 'desire'; that in reality it is the beginning of a state of being far superior to personal existence as we understand it.

But there is the rub. To one who is able to be conscious not only of his own existence, but of the existence of whatever else in heaven above and the earth beneath only as a personality, this super-personal something is utterly inconceivable. How he is going to be able to realize that he is in a higher state without his being able to say, 'I am I,' baffles his understanding. To try to bring the enigma closer to his comprehension by saying to him that the higher state is like that of his manhood as compared with his childhood, is of no avail. His personality as a child is his personality as a man, plus his wider experience. So he expects that his personality in the higher state will be his present personality in its highest development. He can see no significance in his being absorbed by the ALL, either for the ALL, or for himself. As the Oriental quietist extends his quietism to infinity by hoping for that eternally passive state called Nirvana, so the aggressive and ambitious Occidental looks forward to an eternal personal existence in the hereafter, full of happy activities.

So, it would seem that it was no mere accident that the West never adopted for itself a Far Eastern religion. Nor was its adhesion to Christianity due wholly to geographical proximity. Here the controlling factor seems to have been the compelling affinity between this religion and the Western

mind. It is conceivable that a time of reconciliation of religious differences between the Orient and the Occident may come. Many contemporary prophets speak confidently of a 'religion of the future,' a religion that shall be acceptable to the majority, if not to all men, the world over. Such a prophecy presupposes, of course, that in some mysterious way the men and the women of the future will be cast in the same intellectual mould; that there will be no mystics and rationalists, no materialists and spiritualists, no emotionalists and intellectualists, no idealists and realists, and no theists and humanists, but in some way now utterly unaccountable the soul of being will produce a new human race in whose every member all these traits will be happily and perfectly balanced. Then, of course, all will have one and the same religion — the glorious 'religion of the future.' To some of us, however, it seems that that blessed time may not come before our earth has cooled off to such a degree as to be unfit to sustain life of any kind.

At present, therefore, let us try to ascertain whether Christianity, without excluding from its domain other kindred truths, is not sufficiently potent spiritually to lead the Western peoples to that spiritual peace which the peoples of the Far East claim to derive from their native religions.

CHAPTER IV

CHRISTIANITY THE CONNECTING LINK BETWEEN THE EAST AND THE WEST

It is far from my purpose in this chapter to undertake to sustain the old and ungracious assertion that Christianity is the only true religion, and, therefore, all other religions are false. As an adherent of the Christian faith, I find it good, true, and beautiful, but do not consider it the duty of a loyal Christian so to condemn other religions than his own. Jesus never left us such an example, and students of religion find no valid reason for such condemnation. 'Bless, and curse not,' is the only safe and honorable way for a Christian to follow. God, whose witnesses have spoken and still speak to the adherents of the Christian faith, has never left Himself without witnesses among the non-Christian peoples. He is far more generous than his little, intolerant children.

My purpose, therefore, is to state more clearly if I can the thought I mentioned in the preceding chapter, namely, that among the great religions of the world Christianity seems to be the only religion that fits the mentality of the West. This applies also, though in a somewhat lesser degree, to the

Near East, the birthplace of Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism. It is safe to say, I think, that the influence of the religions of the Far East upon Western civilization has been very slight. I am aware of the fact that many attempts have been made to show that indirectly those religions, especially Buddhism, did feed the sources of the Christian religion and give it its most spiritual elements. There are those even who go so far as to assert that before his appearance as a teacher, in those 'mysterious thirty years' of his life, Jesus visited India and there received his 'enlightenment.' The indirect course of this influence is traced from northern India to Egypt, from Egypt to Greece, where the migrating Eastern thought was incorporated in the Pythagorean philosophy. Plato inherited the Pythagorean system, and Platonism transmitted this inheritance to Christianity.

It would be impossible, I think, for any one to affirm or deny this assertion dogmatically. The world of man is not built of spirit-tight compartments. Even in those ancient days, when the world moved very slowly, ideas did cross the national borders and plant themselves in other lands than that of their nativity. The above theory cannot be summarily dismissed as false. But, pleasant as it is to those who would trace every spiritual thought in the possession of man back to India, this

theory still lacks the facts necessary for its validation. So far it rests on 'it is probable.' Nor is it certain that because a foreign religious thought does reach a people, it is, therefore, taken up by that people and made a vital part of its religion.

The theory that Jesus received his 'enlightenment' from India and was virtually a disciple of Buddha is even more frail than the one just mentioned. There are, no doubt, many striking resemblances between the teachings of Buddha and the teachings of Jesus. Both teachers are said to have been miraculously born and to have worked miracles. Each of them had a circle of disciples around him, through whom he transmitted his precepts to the world. Both taught in parables, rejected the allurements of the world, befriended the poor and the outcast, preached love as the highest good, and taught that the finding of life was through the losing of it. These and other resemblances between the two great teachers are considered significant enough to justify the inference that they could not have been purely accidental. And, seeing that Buddhism antedates Christianity by about five hundred years, the further inference is that the younger religion must have been the borrower, and the older, the lender.

Here again it must be said that the theory cannot be summarily dismissed as a wild fancy. It may be

correct. As it is, however, it lacks the support of competent evidence.

The supreme distinction of Buddha and Christ as religious teachers is to be found not only in that they taught lofty precepts, but in the fact that they were the first among the religious leaders of the world to moralize religion, Buddha, of course, preceding. Many of their precepts can be matched by others found scattered among the teachings of other religions. Theirs was the supreme selective genius. Out of the vast store of human experience they chose those things which were of the nature of reality and capable of building up the character of the free, intelligent, pure, and unselfish worshiper.

Yet, is it not possible to suppose that Jesus arrived at the same conclusions with reference to these things as Buddha did, independently and without actually receiving Buddhistic instruction? What seems to be a plain fact is that while the two great teachers agree so strikingly in the precepts they taught, they disagree irreconcilably in their conception of the fundamental principles which underlie all religious teaching. They seem to be worlds apart as regards their ideas of life, the soul, God, and destiny. These involve the ultimate questions for the human mind. Spiritual aspiration and endeavor must rest on some sort of understanding of these realities, even if it be their denial. Here I

do not presume to undertake a comparative evaluation of Buddha's and Jesus' conception of life, the soul, God, and destiny. What I feel fully warranted in saying is that they are radically different, and that if Jesus was really a receptive disciple of Buddhism such a difference would not have occurred.

To Buddha life as man experiences it on this earth is evil. Birth is evil, death is evil, desire is evil. To Jesus there is evil in life, but life itself is not evil. There are evil desires, but desire is not evil. To Buddha the soul is Karma or an accumulation or stream of experiences, and not a spiritual entity. To Jesus the soul is a spiritual being which experiences states of existence. Buddha ignores God and ridicules prayer as useless. Jesus recognizes God as a personal being and a Father who hears prayer, and, therefore, enjoins this act of supplication. Buddha denies definitely the survival of personality after death and affirms the permanence of the truths of experience in the sea of eternal truth, whatever that may be. Jesus teaches the immortality of the soul and the survival of personality as man is conscious of it in this life. His 'kingdom' is a commonwealth of souls and not a universe of abstract truth. Furthermore, Buddha was a philosopher as well as a practical teacher. He dealt profoundly with the problem of the nature and evolution of things. Jesus took no cognizance of

such method. He simply taught in parables and imparted his precepts in the simplest manner; the evolution of the universe and of man formed no subject for him.

Now, it would be strange, indeed, that if the Prophet of Galilee really did receive his religious instruction from Buddhistic sources he should have so utterly failed to betray the fact. It would be strange, indeed, that this Teacher should have returned from the East so little impressed by its theories of life and being in general. He began his ministry by taking up the cry of that humble Jewish teacher, John the Baptist — the expression of Israel's deepest hope — 'The kingdom of God is at hand.' His parables, his short discourses, as well as his advice to individuals, all have come to us as little pictures of the home life of his own people, with the fragrance of the fields and vineyards of Palestine thick upon them. They speak of no Karma, no reincarnation, and no Nirvana; they contain little or no philosophy, and no metaphysics. The salvation of the soul through faith, prayer, hopeful suffering, good doing, and purity of heart form the entire burden of his message. Even in what is called the mystical books of the New Testament — the Gospel and Epistles of John, and the Epistles of Paul — the general tone does not encourage the belief in a vital connection between

Buddhism and Christianity. The claim that the reported saying of Jesus to Nicodemus, 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,' refers to the doctrine of reincarnation does violence to the general trend of John's Gospel. There is not the faintest trace in this Gospel, nor in the New Testament as a whole, that the new birth is conditioned by Karma. It is rather a gift 'from above.' The new man is he that is 'born of the Spirit.'

Nicodemus's inquiry, 'How can a man be born when he is old?' and the answer to it, make clear what the passage really contemplates. The somewhat extended answer makes no reference whatever to 'desire,' nor to rebirth as the inevitable consequence of deeds done in a 'previous' life — that is, Karma — but to a mysterious act of the Spirit. 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.' It would seem that, notwithstanding its more mystical tone, in essence this passage does not differ much from that in the fifty-first Psalm, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.' And in these mystical writings we find no reference to the First Cause as a 'cosmic law,' but as the living God and Father to whom we are admonished to 'pray with-

out ceasing.' Immortality also remains personal and is spoken of as 'eternal life' in the 'Father's house' in which are 'many mansions.' So, whatever monastic Christianity may have borrowed from Buddhism, the New Testament seems to have known nothing of it.

Now, to return to what I have stated in the concluding part of the preceding chapter, it may be fairly said that the adhesion of the Western mind to Christianity is due to a compelling affinity between the two, a relationship which seems impossible between this mind and Far Eastern religions. Nor does the religion of the New Testament need to borrow from the other great religions in order to become sufficient to minister to a full, well-rounded spiritual life. On its practical side it enjoins purity of heart, love of peace, hunger for righteousness, self-denial, love even for the unworthy and undeserving, unremitting service to others, gentleness, faithfulness, goodness, humility, self-control. It glorifies personality by making it God's concern, it makes life on this earth a privilege rather than a punishment or an illusion, and contemplates the purification of desire, and not its destruction. On its mystical side it speaks of new birth through the spirit of God; it teaches that by faith and through contemplation man may become one with God, as a son with a parent, and one with Christ as the full-

grown son of God. It teaches inward illumination through prayer and worship, 'resurrection from the death of sin' to newness of life, through complete resignation to the will of God, prayer in secret, and the assurance of immortality.

Here we have a faith which looks out, and looks in. A religion which contemplates the possibility of this world's becoming the kingdom of God and of his Christ. It is sublime in its simplicity; never too high for the lowly, nor beneath the learned and the wise. Its truth is the truth of life. Its faith links those who exercise it with the World-Soul, and not an abstract law. To it God is not the mere background of being, but a companion of the soul that knows Him. And as the Spirit of God is forever energizing through the realms of being and calling out of their deeps new and higher possibilities, so must the spirit of man, patiently and gladly, join in the work of perpetual creation and betterment. Man is a co-worker with God. He also must seek and save; his soul, being of the nature of God, possesses creative powers. He can give himself and his world beauty for ashes, and garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness. The weapons of his conquests must not be carnal. He must gird his loins with truth, put on the breastplate of righteousness, have his feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, take up the shield of faith, and

slay all evil with the sword of the Spirit. He is the temple of God. He must honor his body as well as his soul, and use his members as instrumentalities of righteousness. Faith, hope, and love — and the greatest of these is love — must be the guiding and controlling powers in his life. He must love, not only to enjoy, but to serve and sacrifice to the uttermost. He must have faith and hope, not only to feel secure, but to strengthen the weak, guide the blind, comfort the sorrowing, impart a saving vision to the despairing, and always endeavor to put himself and others in the embrace of the Eternal Goodness. In sum, by placing the supreme value on the individual soul, Christianity leads its true and faithful adherent to place such a value, not only on his own soul, but on the souls of all men. His objective is not the doing away with 'self,' but with selfishness. Self or personality is of the character of the divine nature, and its end is not destruction, but fulfillment.

Is there any side of human nature to which this religion does not adequately minister? Can we imagine a depth of need or height of aspiration which it does not touch? If it is true that the Western world had at some time in the past access to Buddhism, or any other Far Eastern religion, yet preferred Christianity, it certainly made no poor choice.

But has not the West made a very poor use of the

religion of its adoption? Shall we in trying to answer this question imitate a certain cozy-corner philosopher by saying, 'Christianity has not failed, because it has never been tried,' and meet this clever saying by the more sober one, which is, 'The religion which for nineteen centuries has not succeeded in being tried has failed?' Is there a religion or a religious body in the world that is not open to such criticisms? The same thought may be fully expressed by saying that humanity is forever short of attaining its highest ideals. In fact this also is a begging of the question. The ideal, if it exists at all, must be something yet unattained, something above the actual.

Christianity has not failed, *because it has been tried.* Yes, even in the West, Christianity has not failed. To me its greatest success is to be found in the fact that the peoples who profess it look to it to-day most reverently as the chief means of their redemption from the ills which afflict them. Such homage could not be paid to a religion that has failed, for whatever cause. Certainly the West cannot as yet consider itself 'to have attained,' nor, for that matter, can the East so consider itself. Both are very needy of the grace of God.

To determine the degree of the success or failure of a religion like Christianity among the millions of its professors is a baffling task. In the first place,

spiritual influences are so subtle, so mysterious in their working, that it is most difficult, if not impossible, to obtain a correct estimate of the results of their action upon human life. In the second place, religion cannot be separated from the other agencies of human progress. Great as it is, it is not the only means of betterment, either in the individual life or in society at large. Science, industry, commerce, the closer associations of men with one another in carrying on great enterprises, and the resulting complexity of life, socially and economically, all contribute to the advancement of civilization. The victory or defeat of the religious principle must, therefore, depend in no small measure upon man's intellectual equipment and the extent of his experience in the field of collective action. An ignorant man must of necessity differ in his experience of religion from a learned man, and a hermit from a merchant. But, if a people's religion is comprehensive enough to embrace that people's life from its height to its depth, and lofty enough to be a supreme ideal to the most highly cultured as well as to the ordinary man, then, and despite the stumblings and fallings of its adherents, that religion is a success. So long as men are able to see in religion their supreme good, they are not spiritually dead. So long as Christians of whatever name believe that 'if everybody lived up to Christ's teach-

ing this world would be a paradise,' neither they have failed, nor has their religion.

Defective as Western civilization is, it would be impossible to say what it would have been without Christianity. Nor is it an easy matter to determine how far this religion, whose message opens with 'Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will toward men,' and closes with 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another,' has aided the betterment of this civilization. What we do know is that it has shaped Europe's noblest architecture, art, and music, and deeply penetrated its literature. It has overshadowed the home as God's gift to man, and has had its cloud of witnesses among the great and the small of every generation. It would seem, therefore, that this religion cannot have failed to exert a beneficent influence upon the social life of its devotees and favorably to affect the status of man, woman, and child. The fact that it has not succeeded as yet in completely doing away with greed, hatred, and war should be ascribed to the extreme slowness of human nature to respond to the appeal of the ideal. And when we consider that, compared with the inconceivably long history of man on this earth, Christianity is but the child of yesterday, our astonishment at the slowness of its progress will be greatly mitigated.

The Christianity of the New Testament is often charged with the crudities and cruelties of the creeds which bear its name. This is an unjust accusation. The injustice becomes very apparent when we note that at the present time the appeal of the students of the subject is 'from the creeds to the Gospel,' from what has been said about Christ to what He Himself teaches. In other words, the world is struggling to-day to rid itself, not of Christianity, but of the slavery of the letter, in order that it may come to the freedom of the spirit. The religion of the Nazarene is coming to its own. In politics, in social reform, as well as in religion, the cry is for 'the religion of Jesus.' Here then, if nowhere else, we have, I think, sufficient evidence that Christianity has not failed, nor has the Western world forgotten it.

It should be said, however, that the affinity of the Western mind for Christianity does not mean inhospitality toward other religions. The progress of science and the ever-increasing contacts of the peoples of the earth with one another are strengthening the spirit of mutual tolerance and the desire for closer fellowship between them. The inability of the Western mind to accept the religious systems of the Far East does not mean that they are false, but that their philosophies and methods are largely unacceptable to this mind's essential tendencies.

Furthermore, they have nothing to add to Christianity that is of vital importance.

Therefore, if the West needs, as I think it does, to emulate the East in completely subordinating material to spiritual interests, the religion it now possesses is amply sufficient to lead it in that glorious way. The land of its nativity, its chaste, rational, and deep mysticism, its wide contact with the practical affairs of life, and its Greco-Jewish inheritance, make Christianity the medium of contact and the connecting link between the East and the West. It has its holy of holies for the contemplative worshiper, and a world-wide field of action for the good doer.

CHAPTER V

WESTERN IMITATORS OF THE EAST

The above title should make it clear that the purpose of this chapter is not a discussion of the exchange of ideas between the East and the West. This has been carried on between these two worlds for centuries and is increasing in volume and effectiveness with the passing of time. It is a method from which much is hoped as a promoter of harmony between Orientals and Occidentals. Its practicableness is evidenced by the fact that two peoples as well as two individuals can be fundamentally different as regards their mental equipment and modes of life, and still profit greatly from a mutual exchange of ideas.

This method, however, presupposes a critical attitude on the part of the borrower. The imported idea is supposed to be subjected to careful examination and modification in such a way as to make it fit its new environment. It is much like a piece of raw material which is taken, fashioned, and stamped by the recipient according to his own design. The borrower here does not have to adopt the lender's modes of life in order to profit by his ideas.

Not so is the case with mere imitation. The imi-

tator can derive little or no profit from the ideas and methods of the imitated without actually living his life. It is said that children are keen imitators. Yes; and so are their elders. But in the case of children the process is more successful because, while they imitate their elders, they live also as those elders live. The youngsters are daily moulded body and soul by their environment so that the manners and customs they imitate are distilled in them into character. Imitation, therefore, becomes rather grotesque where the imitator would adopt the manners of the imitated without living his life. Therefore, mere imitation of the East by the West, and *vice versa*, can have only this sad result.

There are to-day individual and groups of seekers of 'Oriental wisdom' in the West who undertake to imitate the quietism of the East. The purpose of the venture is very commendable, indeed. I only wish it were a very frequent indulgence in this bewilderingly busy world. But to an Oriental such an effort seems much like an attempt to swim against the rapids of Niagara. The short period of 'relaxation' and 'meditation' seems so utterly insignificant when compared with the preceding and succeeding long hours of frenzied activity.

Once I was invited to a meeting of would-be 'quietists' in a mid-Western American city. It was conducted by a former New York clergyman who

had been 'converted' to the mystical ways of the East. The devout leader asked his docile hearers to lean back in their chairs, spread their legs full length, extend their arms, placing their open palms upon their legs, close their eyes, and completely relax their frames. Then he asked them to say subjectively, 'Now I am at peace; I am spiritual; I am well; I am immortal; I am the truth.' The idea was very good, but the attitude seemed to me to be amusingly superficial. Those good people seemed like mummies. There was no life in their action: it was exotic rather than indigenous. They sought to be Orientals in theory, but the overwhelming tendencies and activities of their daily lives stood against that theory.

The fact is that the Oriental mystic's relaxation and meditation are not the impromptu acts of a few moments snatched from a life of frantic activity. His whole life is the basis of his meditation. He does not consider that he lives to work. The thousand 'modern improvements' do not encumber his life. The study of scientific feeding does not rack his brain. The things of this world are of value to him, but not of supreme value. They come and they go, but religion stays with him forever. He is, as it were, educated for leisure. Both his soul and his body are tuned to ease; and whenever he gives himself to intensive meditation his bodily organs as

well as mental faculties report at 'quarters' with perfect obedience. And when he is done with his special act of devotion he does not step out into a world entirely at variance with his pious moments — not into a 'secular' world. The Eternal Reality embraces him, his home, his children, his people, his cattle, his business, and the whole world. As I have already said, not every Oriental is a constant meditative mystic, but to great and small among those people the basis of life is religion.

Akin to this imitation of the Oriental quietist is that of the 'selflessness of Christ.' This is preached — and I have no reason to doubt the sincerity of those who preach it — especially during Holy Week. The hearers are urged to be 'utterly selfless' as Christ was; to forget, even to 'bury,' self and thus be 'raised with Him.' Here the real purpose of the message is not what we call unselfishness — the denying to one's self of certain things in favor of other and higher things, or in order to strengthen the spirit of altruism. It is rather the dethroning of self altogether with the purpose of attaining to that divine cosmic consciousness which characterized Jesus.

This is a noble purpose. It is heartening to believe that 'to this event the ages ran.' But here also we are confronted by stiff contrary winds. 'Selflessness' is an alien term to the vocabulary of the

present Western world. It can find no deep soil in it in which to root itself and grow. This, however, should not be understood to mean that the Western world is utterly selfish and sordid; far from it. It only means that the One who experienced selflessness had 'nowhere to lay his head' and was perfectly contented with his humble estate. He proclaimed from the housetop that his kingdom was not of this world. The modern preacher, on the other hand, has too many places to lay his head and he would not be without them. Modern home appointments or 'comforts' are too much with him. The social order in which he lives makes him keenly conscious of his self. His 'little savings' must be safely invested, his salary must be 'adequate,' his life insurance must not be neglected, and — owing to the 'stress of the times' — he does not deem it incongruous with the doctrine of selflessness to urge upon the churches the provision of a pension for aged ministers. In sending out his disciples to preach the kingdom, the Selfless One said to them, 'Get no gold nor silver nor brass in your purses; no wallet for your journey, neither two coats, nor shoes, nor staff, for the laborer is worthy of his food.' The prudent modern missionary is rather willing to 'go and preach,' but not without gold and silver. And, instead of embarking on his momentous mission without even a staff for self-defense, he

is backed up by the combined fleets of Christendom. *The Christians have the best fleets and armies in the world!*

And here I am not simply condemning; I am only calling attention to conditions which make 'selflessness' for the Western preacher — to say nothing about his hearers — impossible. The world is too much with him in spite of all his theories. His argument in rebuttal is that modern conditions are different from those which prevailed in Jesus' day; that we cannot live at the present time as the Orientals of the first century lived, and so forth. Yes, I agree; but neither can we *think* exactly as they did. The selflessness of their spiritual leaders sprang from the totality of their life. It was not a theory born in the minister's study, but a consciousness thousands of years deep.

Furthermore, the spiritual ideals of the East have been fashioned under the hammer of adversity. That ancient world has experienced many joys, but its supreme teachers have been its pains. There is no cup of bitterness imaginable which it has not drunk and no agony with which its soul has not wrestled. The terrors of famine, plague, sorrow, superstition, flood, sword, and every other imaginable calamity, have again and again thrown it back upon its inward resources with the violence of blind fate. It has never known real spiritual tri-

umph to be achieved except through tribulations and anguish. Its most meaningful word has been, 'Set thine heart aright and constantly endure. For gold is tried by fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of adversity.' It was out of this furnace of adversity and as the fruits of a long evolution that the spiritual seers of the East came, furnished with a heart for any fate and the capacity to rise and to lift others above the allurements of the world.

To the Eastern spiritual thinker the West seems to be as yet unacquainted with grief. Compared with the aged East it has known but little of such soul-searching experiences. It is still young and has too many playthings. It has not known enough sorrow and anguish to drive it to the deeper springs of spiritual truth of which it is a joint heir with the East. This is especially the case in America where we 'always have what we want.' Here want and fear and sorrow have never gripped the Nation's heart with the awesomeness of inexorable fate. For both the individual and the Nation the distance between a hope and its realization is too short to induce deep searching of heart and a falling back upon the Giver of all good.

The youthful, aggressive West has often sat with the Master at the wedding feast and not infrequently worked with Him as a healer of the sick and a helper and friend of the outcast, but has

known very little of Gethsemane. The agony of that hour has not really searched the soul of the West like an intense flame, therefore the *prayer* of that hour is not in its heart. It is yet to learn what real Christhood is. Then, and only then, will its preachers know the real meaning of 'selflessness.' Sorrow and adversity do often fall upon individuals with a crushing force, but, taking the human race as a whole, they certainly have been among its most beneficent disciplinarians. An Easterner finds no great difficulty in believing that only those who have trustfully passed through great sorrows know the deepest reality of life. And this is a thing which it is most difficult, if not impossible, to make the gay children of this world understand and take to heart.

Shall we then conclude that prosperity and spirituality do not go together? I very much dislike to draw such a conclusion. The joining of prosperity and spirituality together does not seem to me to be utterly impossible. But I maintain that *the world has yet to prove that they do go together.* So far in history material prosperity has always put the spiritual seers on the defensive. Every one of them has warned the world against it. Thus the ancient scriptural writer[1] sounds this solemn warning: 'Beware lest thou forget the Lord thy God, . . . lest,

[1] Deut. VIII, 11–14.

when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; then thy heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God.' Jesus proclaims the supremacy of the spiritual over the material when he says, 'A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth,' and, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.'

The significant fact here is that in the sayings of the great spiritual teachers of the race we find no solemn warnings against adversity as an enemy of spiritual progress. In fact the 'tribulations and anguish' of life have always been offered to the devotee of the faith — much like danger and death to a soldier — as incentives to, rather than deterrents from, spiritual endeavor. Calamities have never been known to alienate man from God. The New Testament tells us that Jesus 'was made perfect through suffering.' He has been known to the ages as the 'Man of Sorrow,' yet the supreme conqueror. After counting the great trials of life — tribulations, anguish, persecution, famine, sword — Paul cried, 'In all these things we are more than conquerors.' So it appears that the East has always considered adversity as not only compatible with ultimate spiritual triumph, but the way to it.

Are we able to say the same thing of our prosperity? Have our many comforts, wider knowledge, and greater strength been leading us closer to God or driving us away from Him? So far, we are compelled to confess, our intellectual advance and material prosperity have brought us in their train larger police forces, greater armies and navies, deadlier wars, and distracting restlessness. And, worst of all, everything we have achieved tends to make us more keenly conscious of self. To modern civilization 'selflessness' remains a strange and unfamiliar term. It has no real basis in actual life.

Shall we, then, invite sorrow into our life in order that we may attain spiritual victories? No; sorrow must never be invited into any life. The Easterners never courted sorrow for the purpose of wrestling with it. But what will forever stand to their credit is the fact that they succeeded in placing themselves and their sorrows, whenever they overtook them, on the altar of God. They wrung spiritual triumph out of adversity, maintained their hold on the great truths of religion, built temples, and wrote the great scriptures of the world.

But 'the old order changeth, yielding place to new.' And although sorrow and adversity remain in the world, they should not be considered the highway to spiritual self-fulfillment. The moderns have attained many triumphs which to the ancients

seemed impossible. In the domains of science, government, and economics the modern mind has done many wonders unknown to the past. Why, then, should it be deemed impossible to do the same thing in the world of religion? God still lives and is the God of the modern man as He was the God of the ancient man. The eternal secret of victory here, regardless of the years and the centuries, is man's willingness to live the seven days of every week with God. The ancient methods of religion, even those of the Bible, cannot be adopted whole by modern thinkers, but must be *adapted* to their needs according to the measure of their intelligence. A slavish imitation of 'Bible times' can be neither an honor to the Bible nor profitable to Western seekers after God.

God is ready to bless prosperity and joy as He is to bless adversity and sorrow. Both modern times and ancient times are within the divine plan. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, spiritual victory is won under the banner of hope, and not of despair; of faith, and not of doubt; of love, and not of hatred. These forces are eternal, while prosperity and adversity are shifting and transient circumstances. Western civilization is as yet neither hopeless nor Godless. The deep anxiety of millions of its children for its spiritual welfare evidences this fact. A totally depraved person has

not the capacity to be disquieted about his condition or to realize his sad plight. If I were to point out the immediate sources of danger to Western civilization, I should say they were two — Speed and War. The prolifically inventive mind of the Westerner and his aggressive temperament have reached a stage where they are turning his own weapons against him. Speed is wearing away his nerves, and War is killing his best breed. If his scientific knowledge and spiritual idealism are put to the task of moderating his speed and doing away with war, he will survive and will spiritualize his material prosperity. He will do this in a modern fashion. The man of the twentieth century cannot be expected to put the new wine of his own time in the old bottles of the times of Isaiah and Paul and escape disaster. The abundant intellectual and moral harvests of the intervening centuries cannot be accommodated in the barns of pre-Christian times. The poetry and idealization of the present age must take account of its science. Men's minds are being moulded by the new knowledge of God, man, and nature. Their daily tasks also are conditioned by these new revelations. Therefore, religious truth must come to them through the same channels, or remain to a very large extent strange to them. The past cannot be safely ignored altogether, but it must be brought forward and taught

the language of the present. So did the Hebrews deal with the traditions they inherited from the Chaldeans, and Jesus with the traditions he inherited from his people. Each age has had to win its spiritual victories in its own way.

But there is one thing at least on which all the ages agree. It is that spiritual victory takes no account of outward circumstance. The obstacles in the way are never recognized with reference to quantity. He who said, 'Be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world,' gave this secret its clearest revelation. The objective of spiritual conquest is not victory over poverty, nor abundance, nor joy, nor sorrow, taken singly, but over the *world*. Its purpose is nothing less than the establishment of the supreme ascendancy of the soul and its complete mastery over its possessions. The Supreme Conqueror did not condemn business, nor wealth, nor power, as such. On the contrary, he taught that once this soul mastery is secured and the kingdom of God sought first, these 'other things' might be safely added to the Supreme Acquisition. His first advice to the young lawyer who asked Him what he should do to enter into the kingdom, was not that he should dispense with his property. It was only when the Master realized that the young man was himself controlled by the things he thought he possessed that He said to him, 'Go, sell that which

thou hast, and give it to the poor, and thou shalt have a treasure in heaven.' That is, if you are unable to forge forward with your super-baggage, leave it behind you and pursue your goal.

However, a right understanding of the genius of Christianity will show that the task of the soldier of the faith is to conquer the world and not to run away from it. Except in extreme cases like the one above, victory is never made conditional upon the amount of things one possesses. Christianity addresses itself to men and not to things. Possessions are tools in the possessor's hands. If his hands are clean, his heart pure, and his eye single, what he has will inevitably conform to what he is. Since the real objective of the soul — which is the offspring of the Parent-Soul — is the overcoming of the world, there can be no reason why the millionaire should not have as complete sacrificial control over his abundance as the poor widow over her mite.

Was not this one of the reasons why Christianity — which is a religion of victory, and not of surrender — has made such a powerful appeal to the aggressive Western mind? The logic of this mind is that victory will not come as a gift, but must forever be the result of heroic struggle. What Westerners need to do, therefore, first of all, is not to seek parenthetical spiritual peace in the midst of untamed material forces which govern the move-

ments of their daily life, but to put those forces under spiritual control. Whatever the quietists of the East may have been able to accomplish in this way cannot be copied by the Westerners. These have formed entangling alliances with the 'world,' which the former did not know. The Easterners triumphed over their adversity by facing it with a conquering faith in the Controller of Destiny. The Westerners must do the same with their *prosperity*, in their own way, if they are to achieve spiritual victory and inward peace.

The task is, indeed, great — it seems to awe even the elect — but it is not impossible. There is no power in the world that can conquer a soul which is in league with God. 'There is no instrument so tremendous in this world as a human soul committed to what is diviner than itself: it is the two-edged sword of the Spirit with the scabbard thrown away; and wherever difficulties are to be cleft, and fiends of evil to be cut down, there it will be found, flashing on the providential field.'[1] Western civilization is not without access to this Source of power. Here is the field for its logic of victory as the fruit of valiant endeavor. Its decisive battle is not with its goods, but with its soul.

It is frequently said in these days that if we are

[1] James Martineau: *Tides of the Spirit*, p. 52. The Beacon Press, Boston.

to regenerate our life 'we must begin with the children.' Yes; but who is to begin with the children? Some professional tutors? My own judgment is that we have to begin with the parents; and, if we succeed with them, we can fully trust them to communicate the contagion of the spirit to their children. But, if we fail here, then all is lost. The home cannot assign its function to any other institution. It is the spiritual foundation of all other institutions, not excepting the church. Technical instruction may be obtained elsewhere, but if the life of the child can find no real spiritual nourishment in the home, it is bound to grow anæmic. All other institutions are mere boarding-houses.

CHAPTER VI

THE APPEAL OF THE INTANGIBLE

Perhaps it is not altogether a disgrace to the human mind that it is often ruled by the words it creates. Those who are able to escape the tyranny of words are not in the majority among men. Once it becomes current in a favorable sense, a word acquires a well-nigh unlimited sway over the minds of the multitude: nay, even the elect become its willing bondservants.

To-day the word 'practical' is the image of our idolatry. It seems to have acquired a magical power and the tendency to crowd out of the sphere of modern speech all speculative and mystical terms. Even the word 'spiritual' seems to be in danger of being deported as an undesirable alien. The logic of the case is plain and clear: we are living in a scientific age; we deal with tangible things which are accessible to the eye and the hand and which can be weighed and measured. Believing must be conditional upon seeing. 'The things which are not seen' may be eternal, but we deal with 'the things which are seen,' the things which we are sure exist. The intangible, the mystical is of the nature of dreams.

The defense of mysticism as the designation of a cult is no concern of mine. It is rather an uncertain term. Absorption in it, to the exclusion of everything else, has led many to certain spiritual death instead of fullness of life. Detachment from the legitimate duties of this life, vacant dreaming, sensual indulgence, and mental derangement have in many cases accompanied the ardent absorption in mystical contemplation. Yet, to stop here in our judgment of mysticism is greatly to err. The fundamental principle underlying these phenomena is sound and wholesome. To find God in ourselves, and ourselves in God, is the supreme quest of the soul, and is a mystical act. But the essential condition here, and the one which tends to save the seeker from those excesses, is that this union of the soul with God should make us more devoutly mindful of the soul's obligations to the life which now is, as well as that which is to come. It should give us added desire and power to endeavor to make all things new in the world in which we live. This also is God's world; it is part of his House of Many Mansions. If we so love God as to want to be one with Him, we must not divorce ourselves from this world of his.

And before we condemn mysticism unreservedly, let us remember that Jesus was a mystic. His union with the Father was complete; his vision of the

things we call unseen was clear; his praying in the solitude of Olivet was a mystical act; and his declaration that 'the pure in heart shall *see* God' touches the profoundest depths of mysticism. His affords us the noblest example of the mystical mind which can be in heaven[1] and on earth at the same time, deriving power from the one and rendering service to the other. The fruits of his spiritual contemplation were the healing of the sick, the comforting of the sorrowing, the rehabilitation of the outcast, the quickening of redeeming power in the sinner, the rebuking of tyranny, and the opening of the prison doors for those shut in from the light of the higher life. Here we have mysticism as a stream of spiritual power putting in motion the machinery of a life of love, which found its joy in ardent worship and unremitting service. Such also have been the distinguishing characteristics of Jesus' great and true disciples through the ages.

Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that, while mysticism is an essential part of religion, it is by no means the whole of religion. The rational and the moral elements as well as the authority of human experience are also integral parts of religion. The mystic who disregards these elements reduces his religion to a mere intoxicant. He defrauds his

[1] What I mean by 'heaven' is not a place, but the invisible spiritual order.

reason of its rights and starves his moral and social nature. But as there is no great danger in the present age of indulgence in intense mysticism, warning against it is not a pressing necessity. It is in greater danger of being neglected altogether than excessively used. But its entire neglect is neither a credit to man nor a gain to religion. It is a decided loss. It deprives religion of its vitalizing power and sweet intensity. It makes faith in God a mere rational deduction, devoid of concrete experience and emotional attachment to the Controller of Destiny. It deprives man also of that inner spiritual freedom which serves as a safeguard against the tyranny of creed, on the one hand, and barren rationalism, on the other.

For my part I cannot see how one can be religious in the true sense of the word, without being in some measure a mystic. Only through the mystical sense can we feel that we are part of a spiritual order and in intimate touch with reality. Faith in God is a mystical attitude of the soul. Prayer and worship are mystical acts. Even love of the beautiful in its pure sense, and the awareness of all intangible values, are in a large sense mystical states.

And when we think of religion, not as a creed or philosophical formula, but as life, we are called to remember that the richest contents of this life are those deeper tones which elude all definition and

transcend all practical concerns. Into these contents of life our racial experience, no doubt, enters. But this cannot be all. Our spiritual experience is not a mere inheritance; not a bequest of a spiritual ancestor; but the response of our own souls to the touch of an ever-living spiritual reality. God is not dead; He is with us as He was with all the generations which have preceded us. And it is this perpetual contact of the human soul with God that makes the idea of progress intelligible. Inherited instincts and ideas may be added to and revised by their inheritors, but do not possess the power of increasing and improving themselves. Now the mystic's significant contribution to religion and life is the assurance that the way to God is forever open, and can be closed by no human decree. Immediate contact with Him is not only theoretically possible, but has been obtained by the great seers and the pure in heart of every age and race. To this union of man with God, an understanding heart is the way, and love the motive power.

Modern knowledge is not only not antagonistic to this view, but it actually sustains it. We know better to-day than to believe that a man's life consisteth in the things he possesseth. We are wiser than to think that our inquiring, achieving age is in no need of the contemplative life and of quiet resting-places, like all the ages that have gone be-

fore it. Our very achievements themselves with their racking cares are forcing us to recognize our deep need for these things. Medical science and psychology emphasize the importance of these inner spiritual states by employing them as essential means for the quieting of the disorders of the body and the composing of the discords of the mind. We may call the source of these tranquillizing agencies the 'subconscious realm.' Well and good. But if this 'subconscious' is, as it is supposed to be, a storehouse of experiences of our own, and no more, it can give us little that is new. By turning to it we simply revolve within the circle of our own experience. If our need is for something more, as indeed it must be if we are to add a cubit to our spiritual stature, that 'more' must come from some higher source. The subconscious must be the point of our connection with a vaster spiritual order that has something to give. The source of the 'more' must be something active and creative, and not a mere storehouse of forgotten experiences obtained in this sensible world.

'The further limits of our being plunge, it seems to me, into an altogether other dimension of existence from the sensible and merely "understandable" world. . . . So far as our ideal impulses originate in this region (and most of them do originate in it, for we find them possessing us in a way for

which we cannot articulately account), we belong to it in a more intimate sense than that in which we belong in the visible world, for we belong in the most intimate sense wherever our ideals belong. Yet that unseen region is not merely ideal, for it produces effects in this world. When we commune with it, work is actually done upon our finite personality, for we are turned into new men, and consequently in the way of conduct follow in the natural world upon our regenerative change. But that which produces effects within another reality must be termed a reality itself, so I feel as if we had no philosophic excuse for calling the unseen or mystical world unreal.

'God is the natural appellation, for us Christians at least, for the supreme reality, so I will call this higher part of the Universe by the name of God. We and God have business with each other; and in opening ourselves to his influence our deepest destiny is fulfilled. The universe, at those parts of it which our personal being constitutes, takes a turn genuinely for the worse or for the better in proportion as each of us fulfills or evades God's demands.' [1]

I have mentioned in the opening paragraph of this chapter the sway which words and the logic of the 'practical' hold over the minds of men in the

[1] William James: *Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 515–17. Longmans, Green & Co., New York.

present age. Yet, the consoling thing here is that life is forever larger and more dynamic than any theory of it reveals. Its ideals and passions function, regardless of all logical formulas. It refuses to be imprisoned within the confines of 'binding' creeds. It 'openeth and none shall shut, and shutteth and none openeth.'

Life, or the Soul, or the Self, or whatever we choose to call the totality of our being, seems to have a sense of what is practical far more embracing than the smug logic of the intellect. In either case the practical is not only that which is workable, but that which is useful; that which can be constructively used. The term, therefore, is abused when made to mean only the things we exchange and the tools we use in working out our schemes in the outer world. Those inner states of the soul which give it joy and peace and courage and faith in its infinite worth, be they the results of contacts with the things of this world or of dreams and visions and pure mental speculation, are the most useful and practical things in the world. Let a person be deprived of those intangible possessions — faith, hope, and love, with their many allies — and, whatever other things he may or may not have, his life becomes a thirsty desert. He is bound to become a fugitive in the universe. The Soul knows its own essential needs in a way that is beyond the compre-

hension of its humble servant, the intellect. This servant theorizes about the designs of his master, but seems unable fully to know the why and wherefore of them.

That indescribable something which a mother sees in the face of her child is never born of theory or formal logic. It is here, and no one can tell whence it cometh. It is deep as life and stronger than death. It rules the heart as a most beloved tyrant; it claims and sways the whole of life and seems to have the whole universe on its side. It charms the little garments and they cease to be mere pieces of cloth. It touches the cradle and it becomes infinitely more than wood or metal. It sanctifies and sweetens all the cares and drudgeries the services for the child entail and opens depths of love and sympathy in the life of the parent which only those who have known the secret of true parenthood can feel.

The conquest of friendship is as mysterious. It is an invasion of the individual life to which the gates are gladly opened and the invader devoutly welcomed. It is an interpenetration of souls which converts this incoherent world into a social order and sets the solitary in families. It makes of a friend's house a sanctuary and a refuge from doubt and fear and ennui. It enhances self-respect, taps the deepest springs of generosity, and strengthens one's

faith in human nature. It is that mysterious something which is born and not made. If we ever plan to make a friend of a person, we do so after we have felt the compelling charms of that person's qualities; the unconscious fascination conditions our conscious designs.

The attitude of prayer and worship is never the outcome of a well-reasoned plan. We worship first and reason about it afterwards. Whatever the quality of it may be, worship is deep calling unto deep. It is the soul of man straining forward toward the Soul of the Universe through the gravitation of spirits. Worship lives as man's supreme desire because it gives the worshiping soul that unity which no other of his acts can give. It makes of the dreary vastnesses of those 'flaming orbs' a living universe centered in a Parent-Soul who cares for the soul that seeks Him. The true worshiper feels that while to the finite mind clouds and darkness envelop the full designs of this Parent-Soul, righteousness and judgment are the foundation of his throne. The thought of 'God with us' is the mightiest force in human life. If it does nothing else than to make man feel at home in this universe, and death itself a passageway into a larger life, it is worthy of the profoundest reverence as the noblest quest of the soul.

As we shall see, I hope, in later chapters, all life's

activities and achievements, be they material or intellectual, can be of value to us only when converted into those intangible inward satisfactions which 'enkindle generous ardor; feed pure love.'

Religious thinkers of to-day make the cause and aim of spiritual yearning and practice the desire for self-preservation. This should not be disheartening to those who believe that religion is a supernatural revelation. Its purpose *is* self-preservation. The Bible itself teaches that men should seek God in order that they 'might live.' It would seem, however, that one does not need to be either a great metaphysician nor a flighty dreamer to infer that the creative power must have a higher purpose in this mighty instinct of self-preservation than our restless life on this earth reveals. Why, one might ask, should all the forces of our being be so assiduously employed to preserve that which in the end is to be resolved into dust and ashes? Is it not possible to believe that the mystics may have an inkling of the great secret, and that 'the other side' of what we call death must be very fascinatingly interesting?

Be that as it may, religion is a grand means of self-preservation. It preserves its practicer from spiritual decay and saves him from hatred, envy, greed, jealousy, lust, evil-speaking, backbiting, selfishness, despair, and all that these bring in their

train. Above all, it preserves him from falling a prey to the belief that the human soul is a temporary center formed by aimlessly whirling atoms — a deceptive consciousness whose end is dissolution and the dark. To feel that one's self is preserved from these things and buoyed up by the dream of a higher destiny is a grand triumph.

Now (to return for a moment to the idea with which this book began) is this attitude of the soul toward the intangible and unseen purely Oriental, something which the Occident needs to import in order to know what the reality of life is? Obviously this is not the case. This inward sense can neither be imported nor transferred. It is native to the human soul and is strengthened and deepened by cultivation. Let those who fear that the West is 'unspiritual' look beneath the surface of Western life and they will change their minds. The West's overfondness of machinery seems to me to be an affliction and not the expression of its normal life. The vigorous reaction at the present time of millions of minds in the West against this attachment to 'things' sustains this claim, and shows that the patient's reserve power is still large. Beneath the accumulation of 'things,' beneath the material top-heaviness which seems to threaten the very life of Western civilization, there is a spiritual substratum which is still strong enough and deep enough to

guarantee it safety. Of course, like individuals, peoples can commit suicide if they will, but we have no clear evidence that Western civilization is so near to such a precipice.

In speaking of the evidences of spiritual idealism in the West, we should keep in mind that the present age is preëminently an age of transition — of many transitions. Never in the history of the world did so many readjustments challenge the mind of man as to-day. In the field of physical science, sociology, psychology, ethics, religion, politics, industry, commerce, agriculture, and every other human interest, everything seems to be 'ripe for a change.' It is not only religion with which we are concerned; therefore we must not be discouraged because the minds of men are not completely centered in this vital interest. Nor should we lose heart because millions of minds are somewhat off their spiritual center of gravity. The present anxiety about morals and religion encourages the hope that a grand synthesis will follow this unprecedented analysis, whose center can be nothing else than the deepest spiritual interest of the soul.

The Western mind leads in the effecting of these readjustments because of its aggressive tendencies. Nor is it altogether neglecting the religious field and its adjacent regions. Take, for an example, the statistics of books published in this country (which is

supposed to be business-mad) during the year 1924. One would think that, in a country like this, books dealing with business and scientific subjects would from the nature of things be the most numerous, while those on religion would be an insignificant quantity. Yet here are the figures:[1] books on medicine, 315; business, 336; general literature, 431; sociology, 521; science, 645; poetry and drama, 731; religion, 809. Is it not significant, is it not heartening to those who fear that materialism has all but destroyed religion in the West, that the books dealing with the more spiritual subjects like poetry and drama, and with religion, lead all the rest? Such books would not have been put upon the market by the leading publishers of the country had they not realized that there was hunger for such literature in the public mind.

Nor is this all the evidence of the vitality of spiritual idealism. Religion has many allies outside the sphere of prayer and worship. Active interest in the other causes whose purpose is the betterment of man's lot in this world, although it is not sufficient to be a substitute for religion, is closely related to it. It is the evidence of spiritual idealism. One cannot contemplate the material wealth which is conse-

[1] I have taken only the numbers above 300, and have omitted works of fiction because these deal with a variety of subjects, such as religion, sociology, politics, domestic affairs, love affairs, and other subjects.

crated annually to the service of man in this country alone without being profoundly impressed by the motive which lies behind it. Millions of money are placed annually on this altar of sacrifice.[1] They are dedicated to the promotion of religion, education, art, social service of all sorts, patriotism, world peace, the control of disease, and many other essential human needs. And while the gifts of the rich here are great as individual contributions, I am convinced that, taken in the aggregate, the gifts of the less well-to-do and those called 'poor' do not fall short of the others.

Now this recital of good intentions and deeds is not intended to mean that the millennium has come to Western civilization and that 'all is well' with it. Far from it. In fact, there is no danger of any intelligent person drawing such a conclusion. What we actually have here is a most encouraging evidence that life in the West is not wholly materialistic as many seem to believe. God has not forsaken it and given its inward shrines to the owls and the bats. Beneath the surface of its life, so burdened with 'worldly' care, the springs of the spirit still run strong and clear. Our business, therefore, is not to desert faith and court despair, but constantly to

[1] In a public address quoted in the *Boston Herald*, September 2, 1925, Mr. John Hays Hammond stated that in the last decade $2,000,000,000 was devoted to philanthropy in this country.

endeavor to bring those hidden spiritual forces to active service in the affairs of our daily life. The intangible things are our real treasures and the bread and water of our life. To a fuller consideration of them the following chapters will be devoted.

CHAPTER VII

OUR BUSINESS WITH GOD

'We and God have business with each other,' said William James. Yes, we, the whole human race. I do not mean to say that all men are transacting this great 'business' with God on an extensive scale. Like any other important business, this one has its master minds and its mediocrities, those who have the capacity to assume great risks, and those who have not, the leaders and the followers, the heroes and the near-cowards. Yet it seems to me that there is no responsible human being who is not in some way connected with this supreme enterprise.

As a student and servant of religion for many years, I have met and discussed the idea of God with so-called 'atheists' and agnostics, as well as members of that diminishing clan of 'materialists.' So far as I have been able to judge, in almost every case it seemed very evident that the 'unbelieving' arguer had a feeling that there was 'some power' in the universe that was on his side, justifying his contention against the God-idea as generally held. That there was an eternal 'something' — matter, for an example, or that once popular combination of 'matter and force' — which held the secrets of all things. Or, if the contender said modestly that

he did not know what the First Cause was, he seemed to believe that whenever his Unknown became known it would give the lie to faith in the 'Christian God' and enshrine a better Something in his place. So in every case it seemed that the 'Hound of Heaven' was tracking the fleeing disputant. The man who said, 'I am an atheist, thank God,' unwittingly betrayed a great secret.

Once I was told that an elderly lady who was an invalid would often say to her long-suffering attendant, 'To-night I am going to die'; and when the attendant disagreed with her she would answer, 'Well, we will see!' That eternal To-morrow never ceases to promise an explanation for the mysteries of to-day. And so long as men look forward to to-morrow, the universe is never dumb to them. The faith of the Soul will never cease to say to theists and atheists alike, 'There shall be news!'

But, what is God? Let me say that here I mean to advance no extended argument. This, not because I think I have none to advance, but because of the undisputed fact that men's faith in God has never been and never can be established by argument. It is, again, deep calling unto deep. That

> . . . sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> . . . . . .
> A motion and a spirit, that impels

> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things . . .

is a soul faculty, which, like love, mysteriously seeks to be gratified. So 'atheism' will always be a bit of theoretical negation and never a mode of life. It is much like what aviators call an 'air pocket' — a small vacuum in the atmosphere in which the propeller does not 'catch.' But the suspense and fear of falling are only temporary, as the vacuum is; the active machinery soon reconnects with the air. So it is with the atheist. His negatory theory leads him into a vacuum, but there his activities cease. He is then in the attitude which never can impel to high resolve and generous action. It is not of the nature of reality. But his real life tells a different story. When he tries to be generous, loving, tender, helpful, hopeful, and loyal to those high ideals which lift their possessor above all mean and petty things, then he places an eternal value upon human life and consciously and unconsciously exercises faith, and not doubt, toward the universe. Through these modes he deals with reality and is not so 'far from the kingdom of God' as his vacuous theory leads him to believe.

Agnosticism is universal among men in the sense that none as yet are able to 'understand all mysteries and all knowledge.' In the specialized sense in which this term is used it may be said to indicate

intellectual modesty, or an inverted egotism, as the case may be. Once when a small shopkeeper said to me, 'There is *one* thing I don't know exactly, that is the soul,' I did not know in which class to place him. He seemed very modest, but I thought I detected a tinge of egotism in his attitude. Perhaps he belonged in a hospital. Many of those who scarcely know what the term really means and where its proper place in the world of thought is, pose as agnostics in order to invite suspicion that they are exercising the cautiousness of scholarship. But as a full discussion of this subject is not contemplated in the present work, let me say that, so far as the thought of God is concerned, agnosticism has but little claim upon our attention. Here we are in the realm of faith which precedes knowledge and which forever rises above it. Through faith we apprehend God, and through the reason and the intellect we try to comprehend Him. First He besetteth us behind and before, then we try to know as best we can what it is that besetteth us. The ancient psalmist expresses this thought in immortal words where he says,[1] 'O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising; thou understandeth my thought afar off. . . . *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.*' Here we have a faith — full

[1] Ps. 139.

intellectual modesty. To this man (as to all trustful souls) full knowledge of the Eternal is too wonderful, too high to be attained. Yet so close to the soul is He that the psalmist was led to say further, 'Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in the grave, behold, thou art there.'

We do not need to tarry at the inn of 'materialism' even for one night. Modern research in the world of matter, life, and mind has robbed this term of whatever meaning it may have had. What it has been the custom to call 'dead matter' seems to be very much alive. No one to-day is able to determine where matter ends and life begins. The atom seems to be as lively as a humming-bird. So, while it may seem premature, it is not altogether a wild fancy to believe that in his exploration of the atom the scientist is digging at one end of a tunnel at whose other end the mystic also is at work. I do not see how the two seekers after reality are going to avoid meeting one another, shaking hands in fraternal greeting, and leaving the dreary, old-fashioned 'materialist' out in the cold. The time is coming — if it is not already here — when men shall say most reverently, 'The atoms declare the glory of God; and the electrons show his handiwork.'

God is inescapable. He is the life of the universe, the Parent-Life, and man the highest manifestation of that life on the earth. The discovery of God as the greater, richer, fuller life is man's noblest achievement. His faith in his connection with this Parent-Life is to him what the fine roots are to a tree. He draws spiritual vitality from this fuller life as the tree draws nourishment from the soil. When in the course of his evolution man became a self-conscious, purposeful being — the thing we call soul — he revealed the reality of all that is real, the soul of the universe — God. His relation to the universe became that of soul to soul, his vision of the World-Life aspirational, and his consciousness that of companionship.

Therefore, as man cannot escape the universe, he cannot escape God. However a man may define the Eternal Reality, his thought of Him is the deepest fact in his life. His center of gravity is his faith that since the Universal Life is his Parent-Life, and he is within its grand purpose, the full meaning of his own being, with all its concerns, will sometime be revealed. Short of this conclusion the human mind cannot stop; beyond it it cannot go.

In his 'Heroes and Hero-Worship' that lightning-maker, Thomas Carlyle, said, 'The thing a man does practically believe; the thing a man does practically lay to heart concerning his vital relations to

this mysterious Universe, and his duty and destiny there, that is in all cases the primary thing for him, and creatively determines all the rest.' A man can be no more and no less than his conception of these primary relations. A man is never so clearly revealed to himself as when he thinks of the First Cause in relation to his own destiny and the destiny of the world. Whatever his 'ism' may be, when a man lifts himself above the flat surface of instinctive living and reflects upon this universe and his relation to it, he reviews his sincerest autobiography. This thought is too great, too deep to be always before the mind. But whenever a man comes face to face with those thoughts whose grasp and mastery constitute life's decisive battles — such as the fixing of a purpose for his own life, that 'shall give the world the assurance of a man,' or the forming of an estimate of the general significance of human life, or the wrestling with a great sorrow, or any other basic idea — then his imperious guide is his thought of God.

Men have been troubled more about how the Supreme Reality should be defined than about the belief in its existence. Is God a 'personal' being? Is He perfect, or is He a 'growing' God? — and so forth. These questions are lawful, but not expedient. How to define God is our business with ourselves and not with Him. Our conception of Nature

is very superficial, but our relation to her is very real and strong. It is a life-relation. We may not know how to define this totality of things, still we live on her bounty. The great spiritual seers who have given the world its richest treasures have not spent their time in puzzling out a definition of God. His life as they *felt* it was infinitely more to them than a smug definition of it. And the countless generations of men who have shared the faith of those seers in God have done so, not on the basis of definition, but through a fellow-feeling. The common man responds to the appeal of the prophet because he instantly feels that the faith of the prophet is in him also.

Love never defines. Yet the intellect must also function in its own way, as indeed it should. And so far as the intellect is concerned, I think the best definition of God is that given in the third chapter of the book of Exodus, where Moses is pictured speaking with God. Moses wanted to know what God's name was. The answer was, 'I AM THAT I AM.' I have never seen a definition of God which seemed to me to throw any more light on the subject than this declaration. God is the ever-present Reality. So far as the ethical and emotional demands of our nature are concerned, a satisfactory definition of God may be gathered from the Old and the New Testament. God is truth, God is righteous-

ness, God is love. He is the Parent-Life, the Soul of a living universe. Whether God is 'personal' or not depends upon our knowledge of what personality is. If we mean by a 'person' an individual of bounded dimensions (an erroneous conception of personality), then God is not personal. But if personality is self-conscious being, with all its attributes of intelligence, will, emotions, and purpose — finite in man, infinite in God — then God is personal. A believer in a living universe, as our universe is admitted to be, cannot think of God as an inert blank wall; much less can he think of communing with such an irresponsive background. To me God is personal in the truest sense of the word.

Is God perfect? If so, how can we reconcile a perfect God with an imperfect world? Let me say here that I firmly believe in our right to ask any question about God we please, whether it be a 'fool' question or a wise one. The above questions are of the former and not of the latter kind. Perfect to whom? To man, who does not yet know how to cure the whooping-cough? Who is so wise as to tell us what 'perfection' is? 'Who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct him?' It is not so difficult for me to reconcile the thought of a perfect God with that of an imperfect world as to reconcile the utter inability of the human mind to grasp the nature of reality with the pretensions of

that mind to say what that reality should be and do. Let us, therefore, be modest and not vex ourselves with thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls. When we become able to look upon this world through the eyes of God, we shall find that it is not so confused as our juvenile minds think it is.

When a building is in process of construction — the foundation is being dug, and the stone, brick, lumber, and iron are scattered about — the scene seems to the casual onlooker confused and purposeless. But it is not so to the architect. To *him* order reigns where chaos seems to be. Every part of the scattered material is within his plan. Everything that goes into the structure is where it ought to be at every stage in the progress of building. The 'imperfection' of the unfinished building does not touch *him;* and when the structure is completed according to his plans and purpose, then it is perfect.

The God who is 'imperfect, but growing,' is an anomaly. His status and character cannot be discussed until those who believe in such a baby-God are willing to tell us where He gets his possibilities for growth, and up to what He is growing.

'We and God have business with each other.' This is the best thought we possess. Our business with God is our real business in life; all other concerns are subsidiary to it. In the end, it is the only

'paying' business. This thought was most happily expressed — more happily even than William James expressed it — by a good Methodist when he was asked at a prayer meeting what his business was. 'My business,' answered the good man, 'is to praise the Lord, and I run a dry-goods store to pay the expenses.' No human being can do better or more than this. The function of our ordinary business is to pay the cost of our spiritual ideals. So long as such ideals control our daily activities, we have joy and peace; otherwise, all is labor and sorrow.

Our business with God is very practical, indeed. In relation to Him only are we able to find ourselves. We cannot be related to a 'universal law.' In the first place, such a law does not exist; and, in the second place, we cannot conceive of a law enacting and enforcing itself. A law is no more and no less than a mode of action; it simply expresses the motive and will of an actor. If a universal law really exists, it must be the expression of a universal Will. As spiritual beings our relation to a law or mode of action is secondary. Our primary relation is to the Will behind the law, to an abiding reality beyond all change.

God is that reality. He is the Absolute within whose purpose all changes acquire significance and all values are conserved. The idea of value is bound

up with the idea of personality. The universally cherished virtues — righteousness, integrity, love, justice, and their like — are not fanciful abstractions; they are human qualities. They are the attributes of the human personality. What we have is not virtue, but virtuous men and women. Only in relation to persons can we place a value on any virtue. But if human personality is a fugitive in a lifeless, soulless universe, then all is lost, all is dust and ashes. Only in the faith in a living God can we find the permanence of all values and of human personality itself. Within his divine purpose 'all things work together for good.' If, even with this faith, our vision of this supreme purpose is dim, without it we should be in total darkness.

The inspiration of this faith in God enlarges our business with Him and with one another. Because of this faith we feel the urge of the divine life within us, the strength to run and not be weary. The Ideal which controls our thoughts and activities is Eternal Goodness. We are confident that the universe is for us, and not against us; that we are co-workers with the great Builder and Giver of life. Because of this faith our moral ideals acquire deeper significance and universal validity. And it is the preaching of this faith, and not the mere instruction in what we call 'practical religion,' which gives the

Church its excuse for being. In the profoundest experiences of life men turn for light and guidance to the assurance of 'God with us,' and not to the obvious and practical experiences of daily living. Their cry then is, 'Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.' There are soul depths where our real life is centered, which only a hopeful, trustful vision of God and the soul can touch and supply with sustaining vitality.

I have too much respect for my fellow men to think that millions of them go to church for the sole purpose of being told that love is better than hatred, and truth better than falsehood, or even to be informed that 'to be good is to be happy.' The common experiences of life teach all this in a vastly more effective manner than formal preaching ever can do. It is true that preachers of religion have urged these precepts from time immemorial; true also that, devoid of these precepts, the religious message would lose much of its precious contents and its intimate touch with men's daily lives. Yet the evidence is clear that the preaching of the ethical precepts through the ages has lifted them above the obvious and the commonplace by something more compelling than their social utility, great as this is. The pulpit has presented them against the background of a divine universe as evidences of God's righteous law. By endowing truth

and love with cosmic validity the pulpit traces them back to the Parent-Soul and thus clothes them with an awakening mystery. It stabilizes the reason and sublimates the emotions by teaching that while we do not as yet fully know his purpose, God is love and truth and righteousness. So in our efforts to realize these ideals, we do not fight with uncertainty as those who beat the air. Our faith in a living God bestows immortality on every good deed and lends us the strength of an enlightened purpose. The secret Monitor within us tells us that since God is good and we are his children, we are to endeavor always to be good and to do good. If He is love, we are to make love the rule of life in dealing with our fellow men. If He is still creating this world, we are to labor with Him in this divine cause; we are to seek and save, to serve one another as members of one family, to set our faces against all destructive influences, and in every way to make this world a better place to live in.

Our business with God lifts our morality up to the stage of religion. It gives our life wholeness and an inner joy and peace which our moral and social relations alone never can give. The soul never can be a complete master of its environment without religion and we can have no religion without faith in God. It is this faith, and this only, which can give us the victory over life's contending forces. Our

trustful attachment to God, the absolute Master over all the changes and adversities which beset us in this life, is our permanent assurance that, however hard the battle may be, the day for us is never lost. I think I can do no better in seeking to give this thought clear expression, than to close this chapter with the following words:

'When one compares the deeply religious and spiritual person with the best and bravest of those who are not religious, one sees, it must be confessed, that the former possesses something which the others lack. It is not that he is any better morally than his non-religious brother, nor any more appreciative of beauty and love nor any braver. It is, rather, that he has a confidence in the universe and an inner joy which the other does not know. He is, perhaps, no more at home in this world than the other (perhaps he is not so much at home here) but he seems more at home in the universe as a whole. He feels himself in touch, and he acts as if he were in touch, with a larger environment. He either has a more cosmic sense or his attitude toward the cosmos is one of larger hope and greater confidence. Besides this, or as a result of this, he has an inner source of joy and strength which does not seem dependent on outer circumstance, and which in fact seems greatest at times when the outer sources of strength and promise fail. He is, therefore, able to

shed a kind of peace around him which no argument and no mere animal spirits and no mere courage can produce.'[1]

[1] Professor James Bissett Pratt: *The Religious Consciousness*, p. 35. The Macmillan Company, New York.

CHAPTER VIII

GOD AND CÆSAR IN MODERN SOCIETY

The New Testament passage to which the above title alludes is not the only text that has been tortured by false interpretation. The simple matter which the said passage was originally meant to settle has been made the basis of a dualism as strange to the Great Teacher's mind as idol worship. To so many minds — not all of them of the ignorant class, either — Jesus seems to have divided the world into two spheres, the one belonging to God, and the other to Cæsar.

Out of this misconception vast deductions have been made. A sort of impersonal Cæsar — call him 'materialism,' 'secularism,' or whatever you wish — more formidable than the ancient Roman autocrat ever was, had been enthroned and assigned a dominion in human society much vaster than that assigned to God. The Church is given to God, the State to Cæsar; Sunday is — with some reservations — allotted to God; the rest of the week, unconditionally, to Cæsar. Prayer is God's, work is Cæsar's. In sum, 'spiritual' things — whatever they may be — belong to God, 'secular' things to Cæsar.

Now, what the Nazarene evidently meant when he said to his people, 'Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's,' was that they should pay their taxes. Their preconception that the Messiah was to overthrow Cæsar and rule in his place, and that if Jesus was the Messiah he should do that very thing, was apparently not shared by Him. He virtually told them that He was not a political revolutionary. He simply took the common-sense view that, since taxes were necessary for the maintenance of the State, they must be paid. The overthrow of a government cannot be accomplished by the mere refusal of its subjects to pay taxes. Here we have not the slightest hint at a dualism of control whose masters are God and Cæsar. The whole trend of the New Testament is that man 'cannot serve two masters' without committing spiritual suicide.

And it is this misconception of the function of true religion which is driving the modern man to put asunder the things which should be joined together. The soul is an indivisible unit. It is either completely loyal to spiritual ideals, or not loyal at all. It cannot safely divide itself between love and hatred, greed and generosity, truth and falsehood, cursing and praying, licentiousness and chastity. Its true life is found only in spiritual wholeness, which is known to the language of religion as 'holi-

ness.' The things which destroy cannot be joined to the things which build. The constructive forces must be supreme and undisputed, else no progress can be made. Whenever hatred is enfranchised in a man's life, love ceases to be supreme. So also is the effect of greed upon generosity, falsehood upon truth, cursing upon praying, and licentiousness upon purity. There are only two alternatives for man: either the peace of an unreserved and undisputed loyalty to God, or a divided and anxious life.

It is often said that Jesus advised his hearers to give money, which is material, to Cæsar, but to give their spiritual gifts to God. But why should money be considered a material and unclean thing? This medium of exchange which we spend the major part of our time and effort to earn, in what sense do we consider it a thing that is alien to our better life? Of course money can be misused in both the earning and the spending of it; it can be 'tainted.' But so can our mental faculties and moral sense be abused in both the training and the use of them. Prayer itself can be made a cloak of hypocrisy. 'Love of money is the root of all evil' only when money is considered an end in itself and a rod of oppression. But so also is the love of pleasure and fame and power of any sort, even of knowledge, when so considered and used. The way of life and the way of death are always open to man in

every sphere of action, and he rises or falls according as he chooses the one or the other. Why then should money or any other material thing with which man has to do belong to Cæsar, and not to God?

This innocent thing, money, represents toil and sweat and thought and character; it represents the obligation of contract, honor and integrity, and is placed on the altar of God as an offering of the pure heart and the right spirit. When an honest toiler returns to his home with his wages, has not he the right, as he sits at his table and gives the bread to his family, to say to them, 'Take and eat ye of it; this is my body which is broken for you?' And by doing this, does he give his money to Cæsar or to God? Our earnings represent not only the labor of our body, but the purpose of our soul. If this purpose is righteous, then not only our money, but everything we use, from the kitchen utensils to the altar drapery, belongs to the sanctuary of our life.

The modern man's separation of religion from politics virtually pushes God out of the State and enthrones Cæsar there. Here the scapegoat is the idea of the separation of the State from the Church. In other words, the necessity of limiting the ambition of ecclesiastics who claim the privilege of ruling by an extra-natural right, and the erroneous identification of the permanent truths of religion with the

shifting sands of creeds and the externals of organization, are unwittingly used to render the State Godless. Not infrequently one meets politicians — and I use the term in its original noble sense — and other servants of the State, who appear to think they are quite 'progressive' when they say, 'Religion must not be mixed up with politics; "render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's."' What things in the State do belong to some other power than God? Religion is not the Church, and the ecclesiastics are not necessarily the super-type of godly men. Religion antedates the Church and will outlive all forms of creed and organization. Its permanent sanctuary is the human heart and its function is to unite all activity of Church, State, and every other human organization with the soul's ideal of the pure and holy Absolute. Therefore, to divorce religion from politics is not to divorce the Church from the State, but to rob the laws which govern our lives, our homes, our churches, and every other thing we possess of their spiritual center and the bond of their unity. The wise 'secularization' of our organizations means simply their separation from sectarian quarrels, but not from the ideals of religion.

It must be admitted that, owing to the age-old habit of identifying the spirit of religion with the

letter, it has been most difficult to place the prejudice against organized religion where it belongs. However, the task is not beyond the conquering intelligence of the modern man; provided he does not persist in running away from it. He is winning great victories in the field of science, in his effort to separate the grain from the chaff. Here he has pledged himself to reverence and possess, not inherited theories as such, but the truth. Why, then, not do the same in the field of religion? Is religion so much less important than science that we should give ourselves more devotedly to the study of the latter than the former? Or do we fear that religion will not survive the sifting process? Are the things we deal with real, but the things we live by unreal? Are we to allot the creed to God, and our deepest life to Cæsar?

Let us keep in mind the fact that a secular-spiritual dualism never can be limited to the sphere of speculation. It is bound to invade our daily life and cast its shadow over all our activities. A double standard of morals is its inevitable result. If the extensive domain of business in which our daily life is immersed is secular and only the church service is spiritual, can any other conceivable result follow than that a man — if he is at church at all — must pose as a Christian at such service, but live as a pagan the rest of the time? In these times of ours

our most extensive dealing with our fellow men is in the world of business. Here our wrestling is not with material objects, but with moral forces. Here the welfare of individual human souls, of the home, the Church, the State, and the whole of the social fabric, is at stake. If the spiritual forces are not at work in this domain, they are at work nowhere. They cannot be vitally energizing in us in time of leisure because we have precious little of that; what we have of it is spent in a sort of play which neither gives rest nor produces values. So when, according to this dualism, the modern man assigns the office, the factory, the store, and the market to Cæsar, he reduces God to a small stockholder in the enterprises of civilization, whose influence in the counsels of the mighty is quite negligible.

For a business man to try to escape the imperatives of the spiritual life by saying, 'I am not a religious teacher, not even a professed Christian,' and, impliedly, to consider that the spiritual laws do not obtain in the business world, is to try to run away from reality. No, my friend, you may not be a religious teacher nor a professed Christian — and these designations are not necessarily a passport to the blissful state — but you are a *man*. You need faith, you need hope, you need love. Without these things, as a careful examination of your life will prove, you cannot live as a man nor do your work.

And you are bound to lose these possessions if your theory is that this universe is purposeless and involved in death. If you conquer every business difficulty and win every business success, but fail to conquer this theory, you have conquered nothing. Death still stares you in the face. Your possessions, your power, your knowledge, your love for your dear ones, and everything you hold dear in this life, are valueless and purposeless if their destination is the dust. Nothing can be of value until it is related to the soul, and the soul will remain a dark and bewildering mystery until it is related to a spiritual reality in which there is no death and which is permanent beyond all change. Ultimately only faith in this reality — God — can give you mastery over the things you value and strive for as a living soul, and endow your life and human life in general with eternal significance.

It is this theory of life's activities outside the Church, this modern secular-spiritual dualism and its disquieting consequences, which leads the Orientals to assert that Western civilization is materialistic at its core. But the real truth of the matter, as it seems to me, is that the core of Western life is not essentially materialistic. Of this I am certain. The source of the trouble is rather the theoretical detachment of so many of life's outer activities from its inner spiritual center. And, as I have al-

ready stated, our theories are bound in the end to guide our actions. The theory of 'Business is business' has a sinister bearing on the lives of its advocates. It tends to wrench the individual out of his spiritual setting. Business can be nothing else than the application of the philosophy of life to the affairs of life. Its spiritual value can be no greater than that which is inherent in that philosophy. No matter how many business men's clubs pledge themselves by a vote to do business 'on the square,' and how many employers provide club facilities, rest rooms, and humanitarian picnics for their employees, to make them 'more efficient,' whenever business is allowed to be separated from faith in the eternal supremacy of truth, goodness, beauty, and love — God's highest attributes — it is bound to become sordid and to disturb the whole balance of life. Whatever may have been the shortcomings of the ancients, they certainly possessed this great virtue: they maintained the unity of life with all its concerns around its inward spiritual center. The modern man has gained nothing, nay, has lost a great deal by his forcible breaking up of this unity. He has — I hope only temporarily — allowed himself to become the mechanical, instead of the spiritual, engineer of his civilization.

'Speaking of him broadly, the modern man is, as we say, unbalanced. He has lost his balance. The

normal man keeps up a very delicate balance; for he retains contact with the inner and spiritual center of his being, while he moves outward at the same time toward the material component of himself, and of the external universe. But the modern man does not maintain this delicate balance and order; for he loses contact with the center of his own being, and only moves outward toward the material of himself, and the material part of the external universe. He rushes outward in a mad desire to possess the world; and he loses his grip on the world, after having first lost his grip on himself. He loses belief in the spiritual and rational life which should properly lie within himself, and then he loses control of the political and social life which obviously lies outside himself. Thus man devotes himself to matter, and ceases to dominate life and civilization.

'Whether the damage that has been done may yet be repaired is another question.' [1]

Yes, the damage may yet be repaired. The hope for this lies in the fact that the problems of Western civilization are as yet problems of growth and not decay, of youth and not senility. Its soul is still vital and eager, and its inward shrine remains intact. At times its spiritual idealism rises to great

[1] Professor D. W. Fisher: 'Seven Centuries of Civilization,' *Atlantic Monthly*, April, 1925.

heights, which indicates that the substratum of its life is still richly saturated with it. The present abundance of such literature as the article quoted above encourages this conclusion. Therefore, the present and possible task for the modern man is to face reality and put his ideals, and not his fears and misgivings, in his way. To realize — which he is perfectly able to do — that to the soul no definite line of cleavage exists between work and worship, knowledge and faith, politics and religion, race and humanity, the office and the home, business and life. These interests differ only in the degree of their spirituality, but are all spiritual soul interests. Put the soul in tune with the Infinite and it will master and bless all its activities and possessions. The seven days of every week belong to God, and none of them should be given to 'Cæsar.'

CHAPTER IX

WHERE COURAGE HALTS

It is not at all surprising, nor is it to be wholly regretted, that the highly complex character of modern life and its heavy stress, which tend to give ascendancy to the idea of 'each for himself,' should also tend to strengthen and emphasize the cult of courage. 'Play the man,' 'be brave,' 'keep your nerve,' 'play the game,' and kindred phrases are much in vogue in present-day society. The phalanxes of those who would gain a footing in the world of action, where fortunes are being won and lost, are sweeping forward. He who falters and halts is sure to be trampled down. The battle is to the brave.

Certain it is that no one can find real justification for an attempt to belittle this great human quality. Courage is a fundamental quality of life because it is a fundamental need. Without it a life of action is inconceivable. Whether in facing our daily tasks, or the prejudices of a superficial civilization, or an enemy in the field, or any other challenge, courage and resolution are basic necessities. For our chief business in life is not to seek safety, but to assume the risks and dangers of progress and have victory for our objective.

In his book, 'Religious Perplexities,'[1] Dr. L. P. Jacks says, 'As Carlyle was never tired of saying, the ultimate question which every man has to face and answer for himself is this: "Wilt thou be a hero or a coward?" No philosophy can relieve us from the responsibility of having to make that choice. . . . There is a coward and a hero in the breast of every man. Each of the pair has a "logic" of his own adapted to his particular purpose and aim — which is safety for the coward and victory for the hero.'

In view of these universally admitted facts we cannot but wonder why 'courage' is not a New Testament word. It occurs only once in the New Testament writings, and then as meaning 'cheer' and 'confidence' rather than 'fearlessness.' In the Book of Acts, the twenty-eighth chapter, and the fourteenth and fifteenth verses, the writer says, 'And so we came to Rome. And from thence the brethren, when they heard of us, came to meet us . . . whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.'[2] In this basic literature of the Christian religion the substance of the word 'courage' seems to be embodied in the word 'faith' and given a somewhat different meaning from that given to it by pagan philosophers. All this seems strange in view of the fact that Christianity lived

[1] George H. Doran Company, New York.

[2] In 2 Cor. vii, 16, 'courage' is mentioned in a similar sense.

for some time in close touch with Stoicism, which gave courage the highest place in its category of virtues and embodied many of its precepts.

The Stoics taught a very lofty morality. They highly extolled the dignity of human nature, taught world citizenship and human brotherhood, nobly insisted on the dignity and magnanimity of character, and on the necessity of rising above the chances and changes of the world with absolute courage and fortitude. To them the emotions were to be put under the absolute control of reason. The true man was not to be moved by sorrow or pain or the caprice of fortune. Reason and courage were to them the foundation beams of life. But in that great system of philosophy lurked a dangerous weakness: it tended constantly to dry up the springs of emotion and to convert courage into a tense and militant egotism. Magnanimity could not take the place of tenderness, and indifference toward the afflictions of life finally became indifference toward the afflicted. The hero became self-centered and not God-centered, and his disdaining to yield to his emotions prevented him from becoming the sympathetic friend of mankind.

Says Lecky of the Stoics: 'However fully they might reconcile in theory their principles with the widest and most active benevolence, they could not wholly counteract the practical evil of a system

which declared war against the whole emotional side of our being, and reduced human virtue to a kind of majestic egotism; proposing as an example Anaxagoras, who, when told that his son had died, simply observed, "I never supposed that I had begotten an immortal"; or Stilpo, who, when his country had been ruined, his native city captured, and his daughters carried away as slaves or as concubines, boasted that he had lost nothing, for the sage is independent of circumstances. The framework or theory of benevolence might be there, but the animating spirit was absent.'[1]

Now the departure of Christianity from such a philosophy of life seems to have been unwilled and undesigned. This religion marks a fresh start in history. Whether it is capable of standing as a finality for all time to come or not is a judgment which no one has the power to establish. But what seems to be certain, except to the prejudiced, is that Christianity came into the world as a new revelation through Jesus Christ, and remains for humanity a high ideal yet to be attained. Its Founder Himself appeared as 'the evidence of things unseen.' In it the fusion of Hebrew and Greek thought produced something unlike either of them. By proclaiming that God is love, and placing an infinite

[1] *History of European Morals*, vol. 1, p. 191. D. Appleton & Co., New York.

value upon the individual human soul, it stressed those 'benevolent affections which strike the finest chords of our nature.' 'If we want to know what fresh ideas and new convictions the Gospel introduced, we cannot do better than to study carefully the new words which the first Christians were obliged to use. We find in the New Testament a whole list of moral virtues which had no place, or a different place, in non-Christian writings. Such words are love, joy, peace, faith, hope, and humility. When Christianity was fresh from the mint it needed all these words. They belong to Christianity, and are characteristic of it as "liberty, equality, and fraternity" belong to the French Revolution, or as "justice, temperance, prudence, and fortitude" belong to Pagan ethics.'[1]

Courage, as history amply proves, has not been unknown to the devotees and heralds of the Christian faith; but with them it has been embraced by faith in God as Father, and in the infinite possibilities of the human soul, and manifested in the sacrificial adventures of love. This is the type of courage which Paul speaks of where he recalls 'those who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, from weakness

[1] Dean Inge: *Personal Religion and the Life of Devotion*, p. 51. Longmans, Green & Co., New York.

they were made strong.' In that New Testament gem, the thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle of the Corinthians, which opens with the words, 'If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or clanging cymbal,' courage is not mentioned as the Stoics would have mentioned it. It is swallowed up in a flood of sympathy. It is taught the gentler virtues. I am inclined to think that the crest of that great chapter in its description of love is the passage which says, 'Love suffereth long, and is kind; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.' The love which suffers long, and remains kind, is the love which 'never faileth.' Here we have courage glorified. Faith and love give it a divine objective, and prevent its degeneration into brute force.

In our own time there are those who, having lost 'the radiance of the Christian faith,' are, as a natural consequence, seeking to enthrone courage in its place. They would 'face the universe with courage, whatever the Unknown might have for us.' They would substitute this Stoic term 'courage' for Christianity's supreme words 'faith and hope.' It seems to me that the substitution here is an unhappy one. In the first place, the sense of courage is properly and effectually exercised in the face of difficulties and dangers of a more or less definite

character. But it cannot be so exercised in the face of impenetrable mysteries. No person in his senses will even pretend to put courage first in facing the universe. The undertaking is altogether too big for this self-assertion: the mystery is too deep. For if this universe is against us, then we are helpless worms; and if for us, then courage is quite unnecessary. Here the only alternatives are not courage and cowardice, but faith and bewilderment. The universe is either good or bad, living or dead, friendly or antagonistic. Here faith and not combativeness must judge and choose. We are limited either to a spiritual mind which is willing in the face of such an overwhelming mystery to trust where it cannot prove, or to an intellectual dogmatism which would either prove or starve. In other words, here courage halts.

In the second place, courage, as is well known, takes first place on the programme of life where the balance of human interrelations is very unstable. Among the marauding tribes the human characteristics which lead all the rest are two: courage and cunning — the first distinguishing the strong, the second, the weak. But in civilized society, where coöperation takes the place of contention, courage is transformed into confidence and cunning into sincerity. Here the hero is the gentleman who takes counsel, not of his courage, but of his good will.

When I turn my face toward a friend's house, or my own home, I do not summon courage to lead my steps. To do so would be to doubt my friend and my family, and act the part of the treacherous. Toward such shrines of peace and joy, I am led by a nobler guide than courage — the spirit of faith and love. So also when I face the universe as the manifestation of God. It is my Father's house. As such I am to assume in it neither an offensive nor a defensive attitude, but to pursue my daily tasks as one who is at home. My theory of it does not rest on courage, but on the faith that it has nothing but good for me. In anything less than this assurance with regard to the universe, the soul of man can find neither rest nor peace.

In case of a great sorrow, courage can go with the agonized soul only part of the way. In the early stage courage is needed to serve as a resistant to the sudden and severe shock of a great sorrow and to prevent its subject from being crushed by the blow. But later, when contemplation takes the place of blind resistance, and the afflicted cries for reconciliation and consolation, then courage halts. Sorrow is never consoled by perpetual resistance. To shake one's fist in the face of a great sorrow is to increase it and not to conquer it. In such circumstances we must either have faith in the goodness of God, and the friendliness of his universe to both the dead and

the living, or fall into despair. Without this faith, courage is blind.

In my early years in America I was fond of repeating a saying from an address which Robert G. Ingersoll made at the grave of a little child. In that fine little oration on that touching occasion, when the well-known agnostic sought to extract a slight sedative of comfort for the sorrowing mother from his uncertain universe, he said, 'I know how vain it is to gild a grief with words; and yet I wish to take from every grave its fear. Here in this world, where life and death are equal kings, all should be brave enough to meet what all the dead have met.' But my later and maturer reflection on this high-sounding utterance made it seem to me more amusing than either encouraging or consoling. I could not see, as I cannot see now, why the orator, whose first declaration in that address was his purpose to 'take from every grave its fear,' should in the very next sentence call upon his hearers to 'be brave enough' to face a terrorless grave. Did he not — perhaps unwittingly — try to 'gild a grief with words'? What did all the dead meet? He did not say; of course he did not know. He was, however, more wise than brave when at the end of that address he smuggled two Christian terms into it in order to make it mean something. For he concluded by saying, 'We, too, have our religion, and it

is this — help for the living, hope for the dead.' Perhaps the man was more religious at heart than his antagonism toward outworn creeds allowed him to realize.

When we look into the depths of our nature and acquaint ourselves with its essential needs, we do not wonder why the word 'courage,' as generally understood, does not occupy a prominent place in the New Testament, but is superseded by the higher and gentler virtues. Its high place in our common daily life is secure. But life's final victory over selfishness, doubt, hatred, fear, and death cannot be achieved through mere courage. And it is the achievement of this victory which is the chief aim of religion.

It does not seem to me to be an arbitrary procedure to divide the principal stages of our spiritual growth into three soul depths. The first is that which we occupy in our youth and other care-free periods of life. Youth is, as it should be, the time of autocratic joyfulness. It is inhospitable to restraints and only slightly inclined to look into the deeps of life. Here the elements of character and the needs of the soul, being as yet untested by long and hard experiences, are not clearly classified and rated according to their relative importance. The ideals also are in a nebulous state. When in this mood we do not think of God as the Eternal Friend who is

ever present in the mystic shadows about us and ready to commune with us. He is more like a grand intellectual fact, sublime, but remote.

When in our maturer years we enter the world of affairs and are driven by the imperious necessities of life to struggle and to suffer, we touch the second depth of our personality. Here we become keenly aware of the fact that pleasure, if it is to be had at all, must come as the result of constructive achievements; and that the limitations which responsibility imposes are in the normal course of things. We face life with courage; we marshal our native powers and apply them to the tasks and problems of our days. We are serious and full of cares, but are still more conscious of our own selves than of God. This, also, is as it should be. We are supposed to do all that we can before we call for help. But at this stage we are still only partially known to ourselves. Our dealing is much more with the means of living than with life itself.

We begin to touch the third depth of our being as soon as we begin to evaluate our activities, not in terms of gain, but in terms of life. Real maturity begins here. At this stage, the son of the free woman in us begins to claim his rightful supremacy over the son of the bond woman. Values, and not mental and physical struggles, become our objective. Here, if we are alive at all, we seek to know the spiritual

meaning of our courage, our gain, our suffering, and our whole life. The higher satisfactions press upon us for recognition. We all know that neither wealth nor luxury nor power nor courage can give ultimate satisfaction. The only things that can do this are the things we are able to reverence and idealize; and we cannot reverence and idealize what is lower than ourselves. Take the entire host of spiritual seers and great poets of the ages — our loftiest teachers — none of them has ever idealized a man or a nation merely for the abundance of the things that man or that nation possessed nor for mere intellectual resourcefulness. Our final and lasting satisfaction may be found only in our vital and active faith that all our struggles, our hopes, our sorrows, and our joys are related to a spiritual order in which our deepest life is anchored: that we are not alone, because the Father is with us. Here religion in us comes to its own.

He who has not touched this spiritual depth has not yet arrived at his real home. Here our spiritual capital is to be found. If we feel that we have nothing here, then we are poor, regardless of whatever else we may possess. But if we feel the urge of God's spirit within — the spirit of faith, hope, and love — then we are rich and strong: we are in touch with the Eternal Source of power and life.

CHAPTER X

SCIENCE CALLS TO RELIGION

THERE seems to be no logical reason why science and religion should not be good and mutually helpful friends. Why a wider and more accurate knowledge of nature's laws and their operations should be considered inimical to religious aspiration, and this aspiration inimical to such knowledge, is, to a fair-minded thinker, a puzzling question. And although in the minds of many an antagonism does exist between certain religious beliefs and scientific knowledge, a true conception of the real nature of both science and religion makes a clash between them seem absolutely unnatural. There can be no more valid reason for the separation of religion and science into two warring camps than for the establishment of an enmity between a tool and the hand that uses it.

Taking the history of religion as a whole, we find that the contention between science and religion is a comparatively modern thing. The ancients recognized no such segregation. To them there was one body of knowledge, which they sublimated and called 'wisdom.' Whether for good or evil, they joined their theories of the origin of the world and their other views of the physical universe with their

religious faith. In our Bible, for example, we find no trace of a quarrel between cosmological theories and the hopes and aspirations of the soul. In all their struggles against the 'ungodliness' of their times, the great prophets never even hint at their having been annoyed by the encroachments of 'destructive science' upon the sphere of religion. Their age was a creative age. They were hindered by neither canon nor creed. To them the 'law of the Lord' was the law of righteousness: it was the truth, so far as they knew the truth. Not only the great thinker, but the skilled worker also, was endowed with divine wisdom.

So far as can be seen, the great prophets of our religion were not conscious of the fact that for all time to come they were establishing bounds and limits to either religious or any other kind of knowledge. They seem never to have dreamed of the idea that the succeeding generations should have no vision of their own, but be submissive copyists of an infallible past. They were men of conquest in the moral-religious world, whose war cry was, 'Seek ye the Lord, and walk in his way.' An 'infallible' scripture and an 'infallible' church were unknown to them. The Spirit was their guide and their light and the Infinite their quest. Their fight was not against knowledge, but against moral corruption in all its forms.

Now, the bitter root of the contention between science and religion in more modern times has not been the incompatibility of religious faith with scientific knowledge, but the incompatibility of bondage to the letter with the freedom of the spirit. The conflict to-day is not between the prophet of real religion and the prophet of real science, but between the prophet and the scribe — between the creative thinker and the unproductive copyist.

It was after the spirit of prophecy had been thought to have ceased to reveal new visions that the writings of the prophets were canonized and proclaimed as finalities: and it was then that the prophets were really 'stoned.' Both the science and the religion of the past were embalmed and placed in a garnished tomb, whose boundaries were reverently guarded as the limits of human progress. It was largely from the scribe, and not the prophet, that the later world inherited its religion. But the spirit of progress, though thought to be dead, was only slumbering in the darkness of arbitrary authority. The time finally came when the true successors of the prophets rose in both the religious and scientific fields and threw down the gauntlet to the scribes and other guardians of the garnished tomb of past achievements. And it has been the determined resistance of those to whom religion is an inheritance to those to whom it is a perpetual revela-

tion, which has given occasion for warfare between science and religion. The innocent Bible, instead of being received as a revelation of centuries of human search after God, has been stigmatized by millions as an obstacle to progress, and theology — the highest reach of philosophy — as a decree of enslaving dogmas.

Now science is calling to religion and pleading with it to move forward and 'square with the facts.' What the facts are with which religion is thus summoned to square is not always clear. For the world of science is by no means free from the sins which afflict the world of religion. Here also we have only a few original voices and a multitude of echoes. The former are the revealers; the latter, the scribes and dogmatists. It is from these, as a general rule, that the 'challenge' comes to religion, not only to square with the facts, but to disown its own genius and identify itself with science. They are the 'scholars' who are confident that the present scientific theories possess eternal validity, and that 'science will be the religion of the future.' The masters are much more cautious than that. They know science and religion well enough to realize that, while these two great means of human betterment may serve each other to their mutual benefit, they occupy two different spheres in man's life. We shall attempt to enlarge upon this point in the next chapter.

At the present moment our purpose is to show, so far as possible, that science cannot be justly considered an enemy of religion. Those who entertain such a suspicion show their lack of faith not only in science, but in religion as well. If our wider knowledge of the working of God's law in nature is to be considered a menace to our faith in Him, then the 'law of the Lord' cannot be accepted as 'perfect.' Again, if the unseen spiritual order in which we believe is a mere concept of the mind and not the reality which conditions and guides the activities of all that is seen, the sooner we rid ourselves of this belief the better. But if this order is a reality, we have nothing to fear from scientific research. In this case, at least, one might say that to doubt science is to doubt God. And what seems very essential for us to keep in mind is the fact that if we are to retain our faith in an ever-present, ever-living God who worked not only in the past, but 'worketh hitherto,' then we must part company with the dogmatists. For the dogmatist is not only he who clings to a form of faith whether that form expresses a truth or not, but he who says, 'It is finished; and if there is any more truth to be revealed it must come through me and me only.'

The forward-looking men and women among the ministers and teachers of religion in our own times are not only not unfriendly toward science, but are

gratefully mindful of whatever services it has rendered religion. They realize that science has rid our minds of the idea of a God who was much like a magician who appeared on the stage of this mundane world at long intervals and did a 'wondrous thing' for the sole purpose of showing that He could do it. It has dissipated for us the fog of legend and myth and put us face to face with an orderly universe whose laws command the reverential regard of human reason. By opening our eyes to the evolutionary processes in nature, it has led us to realize that man's golden age is not behind but before him, and that the 'perfect' is yet to come. That man is not a fallen but a rising being, whose inconceivably long past betokens for him a much more significant future, even in this life, than he has yet dreamed of. Scientific research in the history of religion has taught us that other religions than our own are not false and ours the only true religion. We have learned and are still learning that religion in all lands and nations is the outcome of a process of development, and that its imperfections are man's imperfections. Science has given us a wider command over the forces of nature, a greater measure of freedom of action, and more comforts in life than our forefathers enjoyed. We are in a better position to-day to sympathize and fraternize with those who differ from us in religious belief than the former gen-

erations were, because, by revealing to us nature's impartiality in fashioning us, and the identity of our human qualities and our social interests, science has in a large measure removed from our minds the idea of the 'cursed heathen.' Our age is 'modern' largely because of this increase of our knowledge which we have acquired through men of science and at their great cost.

In view of the foregoing, one can hardly escape the conclusion that those in the modern Church, who would bar its portals against science, are more fearful than wise. They seem to know no more about science than those who say that science will be the religion of the future know about religion. The belief that the ancient theory of the creation of the world and of man is sacred, because it is mentioned in our Bible, and the theory of evolution is not, because it is found in other books, is purely arbitrary. The ancients expressed their honest opinion concerning the origin of things, and the moderns are as honestly expressing their own opinion on this great subject. Both theories presuppose the existence of an inscrutable Power within and beyond the seen order which energizes through all things. 'Some call it nature, others call it God.' Those who accept the ancient theory as God's truth, and reject the new as a human fabrication, do so, not on the basis of experimental knowledge, but from an

inherited conviction. The great prophets of our religion do not even mention the theory of creation in their teachings. Jesus never spoke of it as the precept on which hung 'the law and the prophets.' So the modern scholar, in viewing the world as his patient study of it reveals it to him, does not find any warrant even to suspect that he is dishonoring the creative power or doing away with spiritual truth.

The fears of ultra-religious conservatives should be calmed, as it seems to me, by the fact that we (and even the so-called Fundamentalists among us) have already given up certain Bible teachings, without vitiating the spirit of our religion. We have long ago ceased to believe that the earth is flat and still, and have accepted the fact that it is a sphere and in constant motion. We no longer believe that the sun 'rises' in the east and 'sets' in the west every day for the sole purpose of lighting and warming our earth. We have also discarded the scriptural idea that sickness is due to demoniacal possession, and have accepted in its place the fact that all bodily disorders are due to physical causes. What an insult it would be, even to a Fundamentalist, to say to him when his daughter is ill that 'she hath a devil.' These and many other Biblical theories we have given up; yet religion as love to God and love to man remains the mightiest force in our life.

Nor does it seem honest and just for us to teach the young in our church schools the ancient theory of creation and withhold from them the modern theory of evolution. I do not hold this new theory to be eternally infallible. It may be that a hundred or a thousand years from now another theory will supersede it. But at present it certainly has the facts on its side. Justice to history and to the youth of the present generation, who cannot study science without studying evolution, compels us as religious teachers to give due recognition to this view of nature and of man. Even if it were possible, it would not be at all safe to divorce the university from the Church. The world of knowledge and the world of religion and morality, although they are not the same, are closely interrelated. Together they form the current of human history.

So when we teach the theory of instantaneous creation in our church schools we do not teach the essence of religion, but a phase of ancient knowledge connected with it. It is a chapter of the history of thought. And there can be no valid reason why we should not continue the study of this history by giving due attention to the current theory of evolution. If we deem it necessary to teach the youth the views of the ancients concerning man and the universe, it certainly is as necessary that we should teach them the views of the moderns. The one set of views is

as much a part of history as the other, and only correct observation can establish the truth of either.

But the common complaint of religious conservatives is, Why should we favor this modern 'scientific dissection' of established beliefs, which so rudely disturbs the minds and consciences of people and tends to rob them of their religious faith? The answer is, first, that true faith is never permanently disturbed by true knowledge. What true knowledge is able to destroy cannot be true faith. What disturbances new and true knowledge may cause are only the throes of a new birth and the heralds of a larger faith. Second, when we consider the conflicts and hatreds and persecutions which rigid conservatism has engendered between individuals and sects for centuries, and which have been due largely to ignorance of the facts, we shall be more than reconciled to the disturbances caused by modern research. When the difference of opinion over a Bible text leads Christians to hate one another, it becomes necessary for them, first, to ascertain what that text was originally meant to express, and whether its contents are beneficially applicable to our present life; and, second, to realize that a fruitful search for the truth is possible only through friendly coöperation and not through contention. The truth is much more precious than sectarian loyalty. We can find and serve the truth infinitely

better as friends than as enemies. The modern students of the Bible in all communions, whose mental stagnation has been disturbed by modern scholarship, do not hate and persecute one another. They consider themselves comrades in a great cause and co-workers in the search for the truth.

It is this attitude, above all things, which modern science tends to create in the minds of men. Science — as we shall see hereafter — does not teach us to be good and affectionate, any more than law teaches us to be good and not commit crime. But science does teach us honest impartiality in our search for the facts. Indirectly it teaches us fair-mindedness. So the call of modern science to religion to 'square with the facts' is not altogether an impertinence. True religion puts no premium on ignorance. Nor, on the other hand, is there any reason in the nature of things which compels religion to bow submissively before the extravagant claims of a certain section of scientific opinion, any more than before the extravagant claims of the creed-makers. Religion has a genius of its own and a mission peculiar to itself. Both the creeds and the theories and facts of science are religion's vehicles and not its essence. They come, and they go, but it goes on forever.

CHAPTER XI

RELIGION ANSWERS SCIENCE

In the preceding chapter we reached the conclusion that the free spirit of religion had no just cause for a quarrel with the valid claims and results of scientific research in any field of thought. We learned that a wider knowledge of nature and of man is in no way inimical to spiritual aspiration and idealization. To the emancipated spiritual thinker 'whatsoever things are true' in the world of science are also true in the world of religion. And truth, from whatever source it may come, is worthy of acceptance.

In the present chapter our purpose is to show that, while science and religion may be friends, they are not the same nor do they occupy the same sphere. No more will science be 'the religion of the future' than it is the religion of the present. Scientific enthusiasts — who are to be found more among the 'echoes' than the original voices — claim that science is all-embracing; that what is generally called the 'spiritual sphere' also falls within the domain of science. This assertion does violence not only to the language, but to the facts, of experience. It is true that a scientist may be a

devout worshiper, a poet, and an artist. He may be a man of prayer and an ardent believer in an invisible spiritual order, and in God and the immortality of the soul. But he cannot be all this as a scientist only; nor can he, by any manner of means, force all those higher interests into the domain of experimental science. He may study their psychology and tabulate the individual's behavior under their influences, but *they* are beyond his ken. So any attempt to identify the religion of our times with their scientific theories would be as unnatural as the identification of life with its mechanism. The spirit of a smile cannot be identified with the anatomy of the human face. Furthermore, such an identification of religion with science would be for the former an entangling alliance which the future — whose scientific theories are bound to differ with those of the present — would have to break up.

'Many of the old beliefs about the physical universe that are found in the pages of the Bible and that early became current in the Church, have been proved erroneous and are no longer generally accepted by intelligent men. As a consequence Christianity itself has suffered widespread discredit and thousands reject it because it seems inextricably bound up with an exploded astronomy, physics, or biology. This is an intolerable and wholly unnecessary situation, and the responsibility rests upon the

Christian minister to put an end to it once and for all. To disentangle Christianity from science, to show that the former, rightly understood, has absolutely no quarrel with the latter, that the Christian believer may accept all the facts discovered by modern observation and experiment without in any way hindering his Christian faith, on the contrary, with the same satisfaction with which any other intelligent man welcomes the advance of human knowledge — this the Christian minister must be able to do if he would meet the religious need of an ever-growing multitude of people both within and without the Church. . . .

'Next to the denial of the possibility of reconciling Christianity and science in which Fundamentalists and unbelievers are at one, the ignorant efforts to reconcile them made by the incompetent are most lamentable. To interpret Christianity, for instance, in terms of a particular scientific theory and thus create over again for a future generation — when the theory may have gone the way of many others — the difficulty we are trying to escape, is egregious folly. We suffer to-day because Christianity has been committed to an outworn science. What we need to do is not to tie it up to some new science, but to disentangle it from science altogether, to show that it belongs to another realm and is equally at home with any science as goodness is or

love or devotion or the sense of beauty; that it is a matter of worship and aspiration and service, not of astronomy or physics or biology. . . .' [1]

Religion as 'worship and aspiration and service' implies a different attitude toward the universe than that which science induces. The straining of the devotee of religion toward the Unseen is not toward an impersonal 'power' or 'law' or 'energy,' which science postulates as the 'cosmic urge.' It is rather toward a living Reality, the Supreme Person, with whom he communes as soul with soul. Even if science should recognize this spiritual Reality as a *fact* — which at present it does not — it would not thereby be converted into religion. Personal religion is not established by the mere recognition on the part of the individual that a Supreme Power exists in the universe. The very core and essence of this religion is the affectional relationship between the individual and God. It is the whole man — thought and affection and will — leaning forward toward an Eternal Goodness as a child leans toward the loving arms of its mother. Knowledge of the workings of nature's laws, which science reveals, is of great value here only in so far as it affords the worshiper a sure footing in his leaning toward the Parent-Soul. Man cannot fall in love with a cold

[1] Arthur Cushman McGiffert, President of the Union Theological Seminary, in *The Christian Register*, October 9, 1924.

fact. No one has yet fallen in love with the multiplication table. It is our sympathetic attachment to a being at the heart of things, who is akin to ourselves, which gives our religion life and stability. When we turn our face toward the Unseen and say, 'Our Father,' we do not address a self-running machine, however marvelously constructed, but a living and gracious Spirit. The intangible spiritual order in which the soul lives does not fall within the domain of science. It is no more accessible to the weighing machine and the measuring rod than love is to the microscope.

Again science and religion differ widely from one another in that the former is descriptive, while the latter is creative. Science adds nothing to the tangible world; it only discovers that which already exists. Our progress under the guidance of science is relative and not absolute: one might say, it is only seeming and not real. What we call 'progress' and 'civilization' is essentially spiritual. Its final status is that of the human motives and ideals, and nothing else. It cannot be evaluated in terms of stars and systems and vast masses of gas and star-dust revolving in space, but in terms of human excellence. Personality is the only measure of progress.

The only new things under the sun are the creations of religion, ethics, and art. They are the pri-

mary elements of progress; all other things are secondary. A prayer is not the discovery of a thing which already exists; it is an invasion of the tangible order by a new spiritual force unconditioned by the ordinary sequence of natural occurrences. It is a new creation which adds to human life an element of power and inspiration and goodness utterly unknown in the laboratory of the scientist. An act of worship is a pursuing by the soul of the vision of its godhood; an effort to make real in its own life the saying, 'Ye are gods, and all of you sons of the Most High.' The only antecedent of an act of worship is the vision of a spiritual order whose life and light is God. It is a free exercise of powers transcending the routine of the material world, and a new addition to that already existing in it.

Science can furnish the artist only the raw material of the pigments, the canvas, and the brush; it can absolutely go no further. This raw material is as old as the material universe, but the picture is a new creation. Its glory is not of this world. It *is*, but it never *was*. In reality it is born of the Fuller Life and not made: the artist himself has no knowledge of its ancestry and beginning of days. The glories of the palaces and cathedrals of the world begin and end with their spiritual designs. These are not discoveries, but creations. Science cannot even adequately describe them; for, to do so re-

quires the possession in a measure of the vision which created them. This science does not have. The great masterpieces also of literature and music belong to the same spiritual order. The spiritual seers and poets are listeners to the divine voice. They refashion the human world according to the visions revealed to them on the Horeb of the soul. What science gives them is a wider world, and it is theirs to make it a better world.

As I have already stated, science has rendered mankind services of immense significance, and, no doubt, will do so even to a greater extent in the future. But up to the present, we are bound to conclude that scientific progress occupies only a secondary place in human life. What real progress mankind has so far achieved has come through the influences exerted upon the human personality as well as upon scientific thought, by the creations of religion, ethics, and art.

The next point to be considered is that science deals with facts, while religion deals with values. To science the world is a field of careful, impartial, and unbiased observation and research. Its task is to gain, arrange, coördinate, and systematize knowledge. Experiment and reasoning are its methods. To it there is no superior and inferior, good and bad, beautiful and ugly, desirable and undesirable, lovable and unlovable. All such dis-

tinctions fall within the realm of values. Health and disease, growth and decay, life and death, are to science phenomena of equal significance: they are all facts.

'The province of science, in the strict and clear sense of the term, is the inorganic world and the physical and chemical processes in the living organisms. In these organisms, however, and especially in human beings, there is much else, the true and the false, the beautiful and the ugly, the right and the wrong, the good and the bad, all the values which men live for and for which they freely give up their lives. . . . In his latest work, "A Beginner's Psychology," published in 1915, Professor E. B. Titchener devotes the first paragraphs of his first chapter to an exposition of the view that values lie entirely outside the province of science. Nothing could be more explicit than the following statement: "We live in a world of values. . . . Everywhere and always our ordinary living implies this reference to values, to better and worse, desirable and undesirable, vulgar and refined. And that is the same as saying that our ordinary living is not scientific. It is not either unscientific, in the regular meaning of that word; it has nothing to do with science; it is non-scientific or extra-scientific. For *science deals, not with values, but with facts.* There is no good or bad, sick or well, useful and useless, in

science." The results of investigation are often useful, but that is because human beings with personal interests are wise enough to turn them to use. But science, which deals with facts, is "impersonal and disinterested." The psychologist studies his mind, but "he does not care as a psychologist — though he may care very much as a human being — whether his mind is superior and talented and broad and cultivated or is the reverse of all these things." These adjectives are all adjectives of value and he is in search of facts. "Science aims at truth; it deals with facts, with the nature of things given, not with values or meanings or uses; and it deals with these materials impersonally and disinterestedly." Again and again does this writer return to the subject with the obvious aim of making the relation of science to what we care most for clear once for all. "Science," he says, "turns its back upon the world of values. . . . *A system of science, whether the science be psychology or any other, is built up of nothing else than facts and logic.* . . . Science is impersonal and disinterested. Theoretical values lie, as practical values also lie, beyond the purview of the scientific enquirer."'[1]

Such a neutrality in the world of values is un-

[1] G. R. Dodson: *Personal and Impersonal Thinking.* Reprinted from *Washington University Studies*, vol. VII, Humanistic Series, No. 1, pp. 47–70. 1919.

known to morals and religion. Here we must take sides; we must be biased in favor of the good, the true, and the beautiful; we must 'abhor that which is evil; and cleave to that which is good.' The mind of the religious thinker is the 'feeling mind.' Emotional idealism — a fusion of reason and emotion — is the maker of his world. To this idealism the world is not merely a field of observation and search for facts, but a field of battle between right and wrong, between the constructive and the destructive forces. It is emotional idealism which raises the issue between barbarism and civilization and draws the æsthetic distinction between the lizard and the wren. To the unfeeling mind the world is a dead level; it is the primitive chaos before the creative spirit stirred its inertia and put its elements in eternal conflict. Such is the world of mere facts and impartial investigation. And as soon as the scientist begins to interpret his facts in terms of human welfare he ceases to be impartial and unbiased; he becomes a moral philosopher and a philanthropist; he bestows emotional values upon his findings. Here he enters into the world of the unpredictable, the extra-scientific world which baffles all logic. It is the world of preferences in which the feeling mind creates values, and love makes the supreme choice. Our real dwelling-place is where our emotions are. Religion possesses us as no

other power does because it is 'four fifths emotion.' It awakens in us the highest emotional idealism because it speaks to us of a God, not only of power, but of love.

The chief function of religion is to strengthen and purify this creative power — emotional idealism — in us and to cause us to 'set our affections on things above.' This is a baffling mystery to science because its measuring and weighing processes cannot reach it. Its logic and its reasoning never can determine what the emotion of to-day will do to-morrow. 'It bloweth where it listeth,' and does its work of creation in a world of its own. Science gives us a drab world of facts without perspective. But emotion, the intensest form of which is love, transforms this world for us into one of colors and forms, of meanings and values. It converts it into a world of landscapes and vistas of beauty and charm. Through it our human world rises from a biological state of sensations and reflexes to a spiritual state of motives and ideals. Its forces become those of love and hatred, faith and doubt, greed and generosity, magnanimity and pettiness. Not until we begin to *feel* these forces contending within us do we begin to live as spiritual beings; and not until we conquer the world by faith and love do we attain our majority and win our true peace and happiness. And it is religion, and not science, that urges

us to fight this good fight, and supplies us with power to achieve victory.

In a recent publication, bearing the promising title, 'The New Decalogue of Science,'[1] the author issues 'Five Warnings' to the world, one of which is, 'That the Golden Rule without Science will wreck the race that tries it.' This reckless statement would be true if it were reversed. The Master who taught the Golden Rule had no such idea of it. It 'worked' very well with Him and his true disciples, high and low, through the ages, without science. The 'duty of eugenics, scientific research, measuring men, preferential reproduction,' and other precepts of this 'New Decalogue,' of which our author is passionately fond, were not advocated by the Nazarene as a prerequisite to good doing. Yet, in a footnote (page 276) Mr. Wiggam says, 'If the religion of Jesus laid hold of men it might bring the millennium.' This certainly is the truth. But Jesus did not say to his disciples, 'Go, first inquire about the potentiality of the protoplasm of your would-be hearer, take an accurate measurement of his intelligence, ascertain whether he was selectively bred, and then, if you find him "fit" and "efficient," say to him, "The kingdom of God is at hand."' The religion of Jesus which this

[1] By Albert Edward Wiggam. The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis.

author approves, contains no such commandments. Neither does it stand against scientific research. It is possible that the time may come when a political State will be established and given the power by scientific men to breed human beings 'preferentially' as we now breed cattle. But it is not clear how such careful breeding will lead men to love one another. Those who crucified Jesus were not an under-breed nor were they sub-normals. One might almost have called them 'Nordics.' Those also who put Socrates to death had a very creditable measure of intelligence. The persecutors of the humble, unlettered followers of the Prince of Peace, who went about doing good, were not all men of lower intelligence. Their leaders were among 'the wise and mighty' of this world, and not among the 'babes' of whom Jesus spoke. Certainly those who planned the World War were giant thinkers, and those who amass great fortunes by other men's toil and sweat do not lack genius and talent.

The assertion that the Golden Rule without science will wreck the race that tries it finds no support in actual human experience. But the fear that science without the Golden Rule will wreck the world is well grounded. The last war proved the bankruptcy of science. In that war physics and chemistry, *without the Golden Rule*, came very nearly destroying civilization. The real defeat in that

conflict was the defeat of humanity; and it came about through men's forgetting their religion and remembering their science. They put their trust, not in the Golden Rule, but 'in reeking tube and iron shard.' Now we are warned against a 'next war' which, we are assured, will be more devastating than the last one because of the new discoveries of science. We are told that such a war, if it comes, will be unspeakably more terrible than any the past has known because biology will add her rain of death upon armies and civilians alike in the form of disease microbes. Right-minded men are imploring the world to invoke the power of the Golden Rule to forestall such a catastrophe. And when we survey the industrial world — the world of applied science — and take account of the 'industrial diseases' and the frightful harvest of injury and death which machinery and speed are inflicting upon mankind, we cannot but hesitate to think of science as the means of our salvation.

If science and religion, nay, if science and humanity, are to be friends, science must be put under control of the spirit of religion. It must be made religion's willing servant. Love to God and man must take the helm before it can be safe to let loose upon humanity the powers of nature which science is discovering. When this is accomplished — and not before — the forces of science will all work to-

gether for man's good. The discoveries of science will give religion an increasingly wider field of service; they will enable the builders of civilization to find and employ more intelligent methods for the right adjustments of practical human relations and the advantageous alliance of man with nature's laws. Then, religion, planting its feet on the foundation of scientific truth, will pursue its supreme mission which is to enfranchise man as the spiritual citizen of the universe. It will furnish him with the spirit of endeavor, and the spirit of release from soul weariness. It will give him a firmer rational validity for his mystical sense by teaching him that it is a foregleam of a wider spiritual liberation in a time that is to be. It will compose his inward discords by calling him to the realization of the fact that his faith in to-morrow is a greater power in him than his knowledge of to-day. It will ennoble his whole nature by assuring him that his soul is the offspring of that universal Parent-Soul, without which he cannot fully find himself, and with which he is never lost.

Meantime let not those who are not versed in scientific lore imagine that they are aliens to 'modern thought.' The values by which we live are timeless. When men believed that the earth was flat, they needed love and its allies to sweeten their lives. Now men believe that the earth is round,

yet their need for love and its allies is no less than that of the men of the past. Hope and faith are as much needed with the theory of evolution as with that of instantaneous creation. The humblest spiritual thinker can contribute his share to the betterment of the world without great scientific knowledge. Whoever gives himself to the worship of God and the service of man; whoever seeks earnestly to extend the boundaries of love and faithfulness and patience and the spirit of service in the world, be he a scholar or an ordinary thinker, rich or poor, is a co-worker with God and a friend of man. These are the things by which we live and the real factors of progress. Let none be discouraged or weary in well-doing. Serving love is within the reach of all of us. Knowledge is precious and should be diligently sought. But let us take to heart the saying, 'If I have all knowledge and all faith so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.'

CHAPTER XII

THE TRUTH THAT MAKES FREE

The wording of the above title is intended to imply that there is a kind of truth which enslaves its adherent. The mere knowledge of a fact is not necessarily a liberating possession. Truth in the abstract is one thing, and truth as an active force in one's life is another. I recall with distressing interest my associations, in my early years in this country, with an elderly gentleman who was fond of collecting the newspaper reports of crime. It was my unenviable privilege to sit with him every evening as a fellow guest in a boarding-house and receive from his trembling hand the newspaper clippings and scan their contents. He was a professional man who might be classed with the educated.

'See here,' he would say to me, as he handed me those clippings, 'is not this world going to the devil? Here are facts which you cannot dispute'; and so forth. The poor man lived in misery because of the facts or the truths he knew. He seemed to me to be the worst slave in America. He saw all the swamps of life, and not a foot of its landscapes.

So far as the essential interests of life are concerned, it might be said that there is a truth that

heals and a truth that kills. The one truth is owned by the builders among men, the other by the destroyers. Each of these parties possesses 'facts'; for, though we may rightly consider what is called evil to be a temporary thing, we cannot escape the conclusion that a temporary thing is a fact while it lasts. Selfishness may not be of the nature of eternal things, yet, since it produces actual effects in our character and life, it is a real thing. Therefore the truth of things as they are is to the soul not the truth that makes free. The victory of the good in human life is never a natural gift or right, but an achievement. It is a reward to him 'that overcometh.' Our belief in a growing world involves the belief that the world is imperfect; it follows, therefore, that whoever sets out to find the evil in the world will certainly find what he seeks, and whoever sets out to find the good will likewise be rewarded. But the effect upon character is not the same in either case. The good is a builder, the evil, a destroyer. The dower of the good is optimism and hopeful service, while the dower of evil is pessimism and sad inactivity — if not the inclination to destroy. 'Seek, and ye shall find' — what ye seek.

The pessimist is not devoid of the truth; he sees real facts. But his chief trouble is that none of the main currents of life runs his way. He is a false prophet because he is joined with the forces of de-

cay, and not of growth; of death, and not of life. When an earthquake or a fire or a flood occurs, he revives and exclaims, 'I told you so; I knew that this world was going to the dogs.' So did many prophesy when the last war broke out. But the gratification of the pessimist at such calamities (if he is ever really pleased with anything) is short-lived. No sooner do the tremors of the earthquake cease, or does the flood recede, or is the fire extinguished, than men, with faith and courage, begin to repair the damage and rebuild the desolate places. The churches are soon reopened and songs and prayers are heard in them; the schools are again alive with singing, laughing children, and the homes aglow with the joys of family life. The chief things the people remember of the catastrophe are the heroic deeds of the optimists, and they proceed again with their daily tasks as if life was good and possessed a sublime purpose.

So did the writer of the Book of Ecclesiastes call life 'Vanity of vanities.' This writer, who puts his own words into the mouth of King Solomon, was no mean philosopher. His ambitious task as he tells us was 'to seek and to search out by wisdom concerning all that is done under heaven.' He did search and seek with much keenness of insight, and was often just and correct in his diagnosis of human life. But, as it would seem, he went out to see how

useless and how evil that life was, and he was abundantly rewarded. He did find the truth that kills.

Life seemed to him to move in a circle, its events following one another in stale succession. 'What profit,' said he, 'hath man of all his labor wherein he laboreth under the sun? One generation goeth, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth forever. The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to the place where it ariseth. The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it turneth about continually in its course, and the wind returneth again to its circuits. . . . All things are full of weariness; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. That which hath been is that which shall be; and that which hath been done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. . . . There is no remembrance of the former generations; neither shall there be any remembrance of the latter generations that are to come among those that shall come after.'

Even wisdom and knowledge seem to him to possess no real worth. 'And I applied my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also was a striving after wind. For in much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.' Invest-

ing one's self in the future also was to this man vanity. For he tells us, 'I hated life, because the work that is wrought under the sun was grievous unto me; for all is vanity and a striving after wind. And I hated all my labor wherein I labored under the sun, seeing that I must leave it unto the man that shall be after me.' Now, although the philosophy of this 'wise' man is not pleasant to read, nevertheless it is interesting in that it presents us with the picture of a soul that has no windows opening toward the Infinite. He himself makes that very clear where he says, 'That which befalleth the sons of men befalleth the beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; and man hath no preëminence above the beast: for all is vanity.' His inevitable conclusion, therefore, is this: 'That which I have seen to be good and to be comely is for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy good in all his labor . . . for this is his portion.'

Twenty-three centuries have elapsed since the writer of Ecclesiastes pronounced life 'vanity' and sealed the death-warrant of hope and spiritual idealism. But the succeeding ages have not confirmed his decision. Since his day a thousand movements have risen in the world as evidences of faith, hope, and love. Since that time Christianity has appeared as the faith of self-sacrificing preachers,

teachers, missionaries, social workers, fathers and mothers, who have labored and are laboring still, not only for the betterment of their own time and generation, but for the welfare of peoples and nations yet unborn. Since that time Europe, old and new, has come into being with all its struggles for freer governments, better morals, finer literature, and more chaste and beautiful art. The American Nation has come into being with its more than one hundred million freemen, its great material and spiritual achievements, and greater hopes and aspirations. Woman was never so free, so intelligent, and so respected as she is to-day, and the child never so loved and cared for. The laboring man is not the silent and obedient slave that he was when this ancient writer was fashioning his dreary, enervating philosophy. The hope of immortality, which was yet in its twilight in the time of that poor pessimist, is now a sovereign power in the hearts of the majority of men. There is no more interesting subject for public discussion in our day than that of the hereafter. Even animals are being spoken of as probable sharers of immortality with human beings; and in every way men live as if life was worth while, and not vanity. Only the intellectual descendants of the Preacher of Ecclesiastes are sad and discouraged. Like their ancestor, they see only the truth that kills.

In every age those who acquire the habit of the indolent, eating-drinking doctrinaire are bound to lose sight of life's high values and to become deaf to the call of destiny. This is the sure way to pessimism. You rarely if ever find an earnest servant and helper of mankind who is in any way discouraged. The real equipment of such a man is not only skill and generosity, but the faith that he is a co-worker with God, and that life is a sacred trust. By the power of this faith he uses even the darkest adversities as stepping-stones to higher things. The chief trouble with the writer of Ecclesiastes was that he started out to 'seek and to search out by wisdom concerning all that is done under the sun,' and in all probability did nothing else. His 'wisdom' led him no further than to sit down and see others work. He did not gird up his loins and go forth as a burden-bearer. That to him was 'vanity.' It is no wonder that life seemed to him dull and purposeless.

It is never safe for any one to ally himself with the retreating shadows of the things called evil. It is never safe to doubt the truth that heals and makes free, however dim at times it might seem. The eternal years are on its side. No good thing is ever a failure, and no evil thing a success. Yes, this world of ours has a dark side to it, but men cannot walk in darkness; nor do they travel toward it.

Whenever it crosses our path and we stumble in it, our larger faith impels us to press on toward the light; it assures us that 'we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better.' One of the striking differences — in fact, the basic difference — between the optimist and the pessimist is that the one sees the night situated between two days, while the other sees the day situated between two nights. Even in the darkness of a winter midnight the optimist says, 'Be of good cheer, it was light yesterday, and it will be light to-morrow.' But the pessimist, even with the glory of a June midday shed all about him, says, 'Be not overly cheerful; it was dark last night, and it will be dark to-night.' Now each of those men tells a truth, and it would seem at first glance that there is no difference between them. But *to the soul* there is a vast practical difference between facing the darkness forever, or facing the light. It is nothing less than the difference between growth and decay, gloom and cheer, life and death.

The direction of vision in a world like ours is of essential importance. In this world there are dark spots — injustice, cruelties, selfishness, and other things we call evil. But they are not our guiding stars. We never could and never do wish them to be the controlling forces in our lives — simply because we know them to be destructive forces. No one who sets out to make this world a better place

to live in arms himself with injustice, selfishness, and cruelty, but with justice, mercy, and generosity. These and other virtues are our bread of life. Therefore, to dwell upon the dark spots in life is to lose faith in both God and man: it is to invite despair and court defeat. Once I saw a lady whom I knew standing on a sidewalk and trembling with indignation at the sight of a man who was beating his horse in the street. When I reached her she turned to me and said, 'And you still believe in a heart of mercy in this universe; look at that man!' 'Mrs. X,' I replied, 'I think I never had a greater reason to believe in a heart of mercy in this universe than now. Were there no such seat of mercy you would not be standing here defending the horse; and I am certain you will find the majority of mankind to be on your side.' It is very important in what direction we look to find the reality of being and the truth that makes free. The 'problem of evil' cannot be solved by speculation, whatever evil may be. The only way to deal with evil is to go forth with the determination to overcome it with good. Hatred is never conquered by hatred, and falsehood is never overcome by falsehood. God is good; and since only good can conquer evil, one with God is a majority. Evil must be overcome, it can be overcome, it will be overcome.

This leads us to a consideration of the scriptural

passage from which the title of this chapter is taken, 'And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'[1] The 'truth' mentioned here is not exactly the truth we generally speak of. It is not knowledge of facts gathered by observation and research and which we call scientific truth, important as this is. In the Bible in general, truth is not intellectual knowledge, but divine reality. It is man's experience of God. To the Hebrew prophets God was a God of truth, which meant faithfulness, goodness, and mercy. His law is truth, his judgments are true and righteous, He desires truth in the inward parts, and in the inward parts He makes those who seek Him to know wisdom. 'Teach me thy way, O Lord; I will walk in thy truth,' cries the psalmist.

In the New Testament, especially in Saint John's Gospel and Epistles, the truth is spoken of as a share of the divine nature as manifested in Christ. He was 'full of grace and truth.' He came to bear witness to divine truth, not only by preaching it, but by being the incarnation of it. His declaration is, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. The truth in these writings is intimately connected with light, life, and love. 'My little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth. Hereby shall we know that we are of the

[1] John VIII, 32.

truth, and shall assure our heart before him.'[1] It is not only the mind, but the heart also that is to be assured of the truth. He who possesses the truth is not he whose misconceptions of things have been corrected by careful observation and study, but he who has been spiritually illumined — who has become Christlike. The evidences of this truth are light and love and mercy as well as veracity. And he who does not possess these qualities, the truth is not in him: he is not a partaker of the divine nature, therefore is in bondage. 'Where the spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.' To be really free is to be rid of inward darkness, such as pessimism is, and of selfishness, envy, hatred, greed, and every other vice. Speaking the truth in love means more than being charitable in one's speech; it is to manifest the divine truth in a life of love and service. He who would live the life of Christ must abhor the works of darkness.

However we might differ with the scriptural writers in matters of phraseology, the fact remains that we have here a beautiful vision of true life; here is everlasting reality. Knowledge is not freedom until it is transformed into pure moral passion whose supreme purpose is to go about doing good. Then it is the truth of God. If I should be told that my new neighbor who has come to live next door

[1] 1 John III, 18, 19.

from me is a good scientist, I should not know whether to trust or to fear him. I should want to know first what his motives were and what he proposed to do with his scientific knowledge. The truth such a man possesses may be used to promote evil designs; it is safe only when it is controlled by the truth of faith and love, else it is a dangerous risk. The highest type of truth is that manifested in such lives as those of Paul, Marcus Aurelius, Saint Francis, George Fox, Abraham Lincoln, Florence Nightingale, Dorothea Dix, and Clara Barton. It is the truth which knows no fear and no doubt, and which links the centuries together in the bond of sympathy and good will.

This truth is the supreme need of our present age, as it was the supreme need of all the ages before. It is the only truth which, when we possess it, we are most sure of, because it is our true life. The things we study intellectually are only symbols of reality. We become conscious of that reality only when we reverently realize that we are the temple of God, and that his Spirit dwells in us. Then our life takes on a sanctity which our mere intellectual theorizing never can give it. He who has this truth in him, which is light and love and mercy and righteousness, cannot hate and defraud others. He sees in others God's image which he has learned to see in himself, and seeks to call it out rather than to de-

face it. Business, wealth, knowledge, power, all become to him means to this end, and not ends in themselves. He is a free man, not because he knows how the stars move, the atoms behave, and the living cells evolve, but because selfishness and hatred and envy have no place in his heart. He has come into 'the glorious liberty of the children of God.'

CHAPTER XIII

THE SECRET OF PRAYER

Prayer is religion's most distinguishing aspect. The fact that the attitude of prayer, spoken or unspoken, involves faith in God and in the possibility of the soul's putting itself in personal communion with Him, makes prayer the very core of religion. Without faith in God the experience of prayer is an impossibility; and without this experience faith in God is only a passive philosophical theory. A prayerless religion is a contradiction in terms.

It is unimportant for the present purpose whether one's view of God is ancient or modern, or whether one is able, or not, to name this mysterious Power. Whoever is inwardly moved to throw himself into the embrace of a higher power, which he believes to be divine and is able to help, prays. Nor does scientific criticism touch this inward experience; prayer is a mystical act with which science has nothing to do. Of course it is assumed that the prayer of a civilized man differs as regards its rational basis from the prayer of the savage, and the prayer of an educated person from that of the ignorant. But in its essence, prayer is an affectional outgoing of the soul toward the Divine Being from whom it

draws its life. Its law is not the law of physics nor of logic, but of love. Its secret is to be found in this affectional relationship between man and God, and in no other. The intellect and the reason, with their progressive accumulations of knowledge and wisdom, serve as good and wise counselors to the praying soul. There is no need to say — as many do — that we must 'use our intelligence in praying'; we always do. There is no human being that ever prays above or below the standard of his own intelligence, even when repeating others' prayers. The Lord's Prayer, for example, though universally used by Christians, does not have the same meaning for every individual, nor for the same individual in all circumstances. Prayer is an act of the whole of personality and is, therefore, affected by the scope of the intelligence and the quality of the emotions. When not a mere mechanical repetition of a legalistic form, a prayer is a revelation of the suppliant's life: it brings into view the things he has lived for and is couched in the phraseology of his habitual calling. It is said of an agnostic, who apparently did not wish to die a prayerless death, that when he felt the approach of the great Destroyer he said, 'O God, if there is any God, save my soul, if I have any soul.' And of a mathematician who under similar circumstances prayed, 'O God, who knoweth the end of number and the exact area of the

circle, receive me on a straight line and judge me at a right angle.' These are normal prayers; their respective authors could hardly have supplicated the Eternal in any other way.

So, prayer is not only the expression of a need, but an epitome of life. It is the entire personality laid open before God. Those to whom prayer is 'natural' and an ineffable communion with the Father of Spirits are those whose lives have been a preparation for the sacred act. They are those who live the seven days of the week with God. The unnaturalness of prayer in any given case indicates a lack of acquaintance with the spiritual order. Here the suppliant has a great battle to fight, but the victory is not impossible for the persevering soul. To such a person Jesus would say, 'Have faith in God,' which is the root and life of prayer. Have faith in God as Father, with all the implications of the term. He who has no such filial relation to God cannot and does not pray.

The secret of prayer is known to those who live in the spiritual order, which the old theologians designated as 'supernatural.' To the modern mind, however, the term 'supernatural' is not acceptable. Nor do we find it in Jesus' sayings which have come down to us. Modern knowledge finds no warrant for the division of the universe into two spheres, the one natural, and the other supernatural. The things

we call 'natural' cannot be outside God's dominion and power, else He could not be all, through all, and in all. And if all his works are capable of being understood as the human mind grows in its knowledge of them, then they are natural. The things we do not yet understand are not of a separate order from those which we do understand; they are simply unknown to us, but are knowable because governed by the same creative Mind. Lightning and thunder were considered by the ancients — as they are considered by the superstitious in our own time — as supernatural occurrences. Modern science, however, finds them to be as natural as the rolling of a stone down hill. Yet, when we consider their natural cause we find them to be no less marvelous and awe-inspiring than if they had been supernatural. So we can have no justification for concluding that what we do not as yet see and understand — and it is an immense amount — of this universe is 'supernatural.' The spiritual laws are as natural to the soul that knows them as what we call physical laws are to the intellect.

Nor is the spiritual order — be it called 'natural' or 'supernatural' — a thing of the future only, a state which can be entered into only after death. It is the order of higher values and nobler ends, in which the pure in heart live, here and hereafter. The element of time is of little importance here.

The soul's consciousness of God as the object of faith and love stands prior to the ideas of time and space. Those who have attained this consciousness — who love God because they trust Him, and trust God because they love Him — are already enfranchized citizens of the spiritual order. They are at the secret source of whatever comes to pass in the world of time and space. To this inward relationship the great prophets and seers owe their sublime sense of victory over all the chances and changes of the world. They feel themselves to be one with the Cause, and not the effects of universal events. Unlike a certain class of modern psychologists, the soul to them is not the outcome, but the cause of its many experiences. It is the captain of the ship of life, who is guided by the stars, and not the waves. God is their refuge and strength. Their prayers are intimate communions with the One who can and cares to help.

To the prophets and the seers and their true disciples of every age and race, the tangible world is a symbol and a guide-post to reality. It is a highway, and not a prison-house of the soul. No outward events can still the voice of prayer to those who have a clear vision of the true, the good, and the beautiful — realities and values which flow from the Infinite Source and which experience discovers, but cannot create. And it is natural that to

those who lack this vision, prayer should seem but foolishness. They do not possess its secret. But their opinion of it is of no more worth than is the blind's opinion of light and color.

Now, then, the first prerequisite to prayer is the realization that as spiritual beings we belong to the order of the creative forces whose controller and guide is God. He is closer to us than the crude objects with which our physical senses deal. We share with Him the control of world events and the creation of spiritual values. We and the Father are one. And in this realm of original types and creative powers, prayer is the natural language of the soul. It is the native tongue of God's co-workers. The soul seeks Him in prayer as a novice seeks the instruction and inspiration of his master.

The spiritual order begins where we are and leads to the Infinite. It begins in our own lives when we give ourselves faithfully and joyfully to the performance of our duties, be they the ordinary domestic concerns or the vaster interests of a nation's life. Our perception of the higher values and nobler ends in our daily duties raises them from the status of a hard master's tasks to that of spiritual opportunities. The higher and the lower life stand before us clear and distinct. And while we find ourselves face to face with the deep mystery of our being, we are not mystified and bewildered. We are able to

see the way, if not the goal. The thoughts and deeds which tend to elevate our lives and enrich our characters are our guides to Him who is truth, goodness, and beauty. Nor are we drugged and deceived here by the magic of abstract ideas. The way of life lies before us as a scroll bearing the deep footprints of a host of spiritual conquerors, men and women like ourselves in whom the word became flesh and the highest spiritual ideals we know transformed into human actualities. Not only do they assure us of the reality of the spiritual order, but of the fact that what they attained is possible for us also. We cannot doubt them. We cannot discredit the testimonies and ignore the lives of those who actually conquered hatred by love and sin by righteousness, and to whom the world is compelled to turn in its deepest anxieties for the gospel of its peace and consolation. Notwithstanding their diversity of race and language, their testimony is one: their open vision of God gave them the victory.

'There is, therefore, no substitute for first-hand experience in the spiritual life. We must believe the explorers of the high places of the unseen world when they tell us that they have been there, and found what they sought. But they cannot really tell us *what* they found; if we wish to see what they have seen, we must live as they have lived. . . . But the lives of the great mystics will bear the most

rigorous inspection; and we may surely say that it is to a large extent through such men and women that the Spirit of God kindles the fire of divine love and the longing for divine knowledge in the hearts of others. Nor should any one acquiesce in being without this precious gift until he has striven long and patiently to acquire it. The practice of the presence of God may involve very many hours of hard work; but the reward is great; for this is the joy that no man may take from us; this is the faith which is the human side of divine grace, an experiment which is becoming an experience, a foretaste and assurance of the rest that remaineth for the people of God.' [1]

[1] Dean Inge: *Personal Religion and the Life of Devotion*, p. 31.

CHAPTER XIV

PRAYER AND THE MODERN IDEA OF GOD

It must be evident to intelligent people that what we call 'the modern idea of God' is not so clear and obvious that any one may readily understand it. The use of this phrase by some moderns conveys the impression that the children of the twentieth century, from one end of the earth to the other, possess an idea of God which is superior to any the ancients ever knew. But the actual facts do not bear out this claim. What is certain is that we have to-day all the ideas of God known to history. Nor does it seem very evident that the moderns have discovered a *new* idea of God.

Even a superficial acquaintance with the ancient religions and the ancient philosophies will show that all the ideas of God known to us were also known to the ancients. God as an anthropomorphic autocrat, God as the life of the universe, as spirit, eternal reality, law, truth, energy, goodness, righteousness, love, and every other sort of being the modern mind can conceive, was known in the world long before modern civilization came into being. Those who have 'discovered,' in more recent times, a new idea of God have simply seized upon one or

the other of those ancient designations of the divine reality and eliminated the rest. Those who think of God as law go back to Buddha; those who think of Him as the only reality — the All — derive from Brahmanism; those who own the man-like God draw from the wells of ancient Hebrew thought; those to whom God is the remote Absolute borrow from Plato; those who know God as spirit and as a loving Father inherit from Christianity; those who say there is no God emulate the psalmist's 'fool' who 'saith in his heart, there is no God.' At least, so far as this idea is concerned there seems to be no new thing under the sun.

Furthermore, when we speak of the 'twentieth century's idea of God' we discredit what intelligence we possess. The people of this century do not all of them have one idea of God. Millions of them still worship the localized, man-like God, and other millions have no idea of God at all. The space between these two factions is filled with all shades of opinion concerning the First Cause. It all depends upon what brains men may have and where they live. The fact is, the influence of the 'modern' idea of God on prayer and worship is greatly exaggerated. It betokens a state of bewilderment rather than the assurance of true knowledge.

As a matter of fact, the difficulties which men of to-day encounter with reference to prayer are not

peculiar to our own age. 'How does God hear?' and 'How does God know?' are questions as old as the Bible, and, no doubt, older. But in this 'scientific' age of ours — and it is scientific to a section of the human race — such questions are supposed to be more intelligent than in the past, and on the whole they are. 'The reign of law' which science speaks of is supposed to render prayer useless. The ancients, it is assumed, did not know this; therefore they gave prayer such a high place in their life. But the modern man is much wiser than that.

The phrase 'the reign of law' serves the present age both as a wise guide and as a stumbling-block. And like any other significant utterance, it is repeated by millions of those who know little or nothing of its real meaning. The discovery of the reign of law is one of the grand achievements of the human mind. It is a great emancipator, and I am inclined to believe that it must be pleasing to God Himself. This discovery is helping us to rid our minds of certain notions of God which seem utterly childish. Men are being freed to-day from the idea of a localized God sitting in a certain place in the universe, surrounded by a court like an Oriental autocrat, and ordering the keeping of a record of Jews and Gentiles, Mohammedans and Christians, Catholics and Protestants, for the purpose of judging them according to their sectarian affiliations.

We are being rid of the idea of a God who would command the sun and the moon to stand still in their courses in order to enable a Hebrew general to annihilate a heathen army. Such ideas — let it be said to the credit of the human mind and the glory of God — are being dispelled by modern knowledge.

But it is not certain that any great scientist will risk his reputation on the assertion that this universe of ours is governed by one law as a State is governed by an autocrat. Nor is it certain that the axioms of science known to us obtain in all the vast realms of being. To assert that they do is to make a venture of faith and not to speak from knowledge. What we do know is that in any field of study known to us in the tangible world there is a regularity of procedure which we call law, and which, so far as we know, does not admit of chance occurrences. Our research leads us to believe that the creative power acts in an orderly manner or, as we say, according to law. But we must not forget that 'law' is simply a name for the regularity of action in nature, and nothing else. So is law in the State. The law does not govern; it is the people who govern, and the law is the expression of the people's will and purpose. It is the motive and the purpose which bring about action, and the mode of this action is what we call law. Now to invest this word

'law' with a creative power and the will to rule simply because it is a scientific word, is no credit to any intelligent person.

Nor is it a brilliant achievement to endow the word 'evolution' with similar powers. Evolution does not originate things. This much-abused term simply describes a method of creation different from that held by the ancients. It implies that living beings as well as other beings were not created instantaneously, as the ancients thought, but have been and are being created by slow degrees. The process of creation still goes on before our eyes; but we generally prefer to call this process 'evolution' because of its gradual unfolding. Instead of saying, 'God created,' we say, 'God creates.' In either case, however, what we behold is creation, else the term 'progress' becomes meaningless. New forms and new ideals can neither come out of nothing nor of old forms and old ideals. The old is simply a stage in the history of creation; it can no more evolve into a higher and better state without an additional supply of life from the Source of life than can the superstructure spring from the foundation stones without additional building. Mercy is not cruelty grown old, but a fresh impulse from the heart of being, a new acquirement of life. The Platos and the Shakespeares of the race did not spring from the skull of the anthropoid ape without

the perpetual supply of fresh spiritual power from the Eternal Mind. The anthropoid ape was an anthropoid ape, and nothing more — literally a stepping-stone to something higher than his own potentialities could rise to. Time, without the creative mind of man, never could have evolved a cathedral out of a cave, or a palace out of a hut. So also is the story of all social and moral progress. Savagery has been superseded by civilization not simply through the passing of time, but through the perpetually creative action of the human mind, the offspring of the Eternal Mind. Evolution in nature tells the same story: Mind and Purpose are back of every advance in all the realms of the universe. Motive forever precedes action, and it is only in relation to the operations of the creative Mind that the word 'evolution' can have any meaning whatever.

'If, then, the human mind is greatly creative in its highest forms and flights, how can we deny that it may be creative, in a small way, in the moral struggles of the common man. By a long series of such creative acts on the part of men both great and small, the moral tradition, the highest product of organic evolution, has been painfully and slowly evolved. Why should we doubt that organic evolution is a creative process and that Mind is the creative agency? We have no theory of organic evolu-

tion remotely adequate to the problem. But it seems clear that any theory which ignores Mind condemns itself as a triviality.

'The belief in certain creative power of original determination is a necessity of our moral nature. Without it, we are paralyzed; unless we suffer a degree of dissociation which permits us to hold, like the insane patient, incompatible beliefs.'[1]

Now it is, I believe, very clear that our relation to 'natural law' as praying souls is secondary. Our primary relation, as spiritual beings endowed with creative power, is to the living God, the creative Mind. 'Law' and 'evolution' are the terms by which we describe his method of action. Just as we originate our own methods in creating works of art and literature, so does the creative Mind originate in nature what we call 'law.' And — in the language of Professor McDougall — 'any theory [of evolution] which ignores Mind condemns itself as a triviality.' Further, any theory which makes God a prisoner of his own law condemns itself as nonsense. Nor is man wholly subject to law. He also is a creative agent who uses the law to further his own designs. In building a house we are moved to act by a spiritual motive and purpose. We create the design and then harness the law of nature to accom-

[1] William McDougall: *Outlines of Psychology*, p. 448. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.

plish it. Without this spiritual purpose the natural law never could build a house. Nor do we violate the law by commanding nature to do our bidding; we add to the law purpose. When the material of which the house is built was yet in the ground there was as much law in it as when it was organized in the form of a house, but not so much purpose; and it was the purpose, and not the law, which built the house.

Prayer, as I have already stated, is a creative act. It adds to our life power and inspiration and peace. It violates no natural law nor is it hindered by any. Through prayer we seek a deeper knowledge of God's purpose as well as his law. As creative, aspiring souls we are no strangers to the Supreme Person. 'In him we live, and move, and have our being'; therefore we live in a spiritual order as well as a physical order. Natural law is our guide to Him who is its source and ruler. Through prayer we rise from the limitations of the law to the freedom of the creative Spirit, or, as the mystic would say, we rise above the 'world.' 'If thou forsakest the world,' says Jacob Behmen, 'then thou comest into that, out of which the world was made. . . . Thou rulest over all creatures, being reunited with thine Original, in that very ground or source, out of which they were and are created.'

Now, then, so far as natural law, or the 'modern'

idea of God, is concerned, prayer has nothing to fear. What we know of nature does not in the slightest degree render false the belief that 'spirit with spirit can meet.' It is with the Eternal Spirit that we commune in prayer. Have faith in God and pray without ceasing. 'More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.'

Prayer has been defined as 'the soul's sincere desire.' Yes; but a sincere desire is not necessarily a *good* desire. A desire may be sincere and still be abominable. Of course we are strongly inclined to associate sincerity with goodness, but human experience tends to modify this attitude. It tends to show that sincerity is no guaranty of goodness. We have no real reason to doubt the sincerity of the author of that prayer contained in the One Hundred and Ninth Psalm. Yet here is what that man asked the Lord to do to his enemy: 'Set thou a wicked man over him; and let an adversary stand at his right hand. When he is judged, let him come forth guilty; and let his prayer be turned into sin. Let his days be few; and let another take his office. Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow. Let his children be vagabonds, and beg; and let them seek their bread out of their desolate places. Let the extortioner take all that he hath; and let strangers make spoil of his labor. Let there be none to extend kindness unto him; neither let there be

any to have pity on his fatherless children.' Here we have sincere hatred, and the very antithesis of the true spirit of prayer. How different is the sincerity of Him who remembered his enemies while upon the cross by imploring the Father to 'forgive them, for they know not what they do.'

The soul's sincere desire needs to be spiritually educated. We have to study before we can practice spiritual truth. We must not approach in prayer the All-Pure with impure and revengeful motives. If we want Him to forgive us, we must forgive; if we want Him to love us, we must love, and not hate; if we want Him to help us, we must help those who need our help; if we want Him to bless us, we must bless, and curse not. In other words, we must not call upon God to serve and strengthen our lower desires. The High and Holy One is purer than to countenance iniquity. Our first and basic prayer should be, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy Spirit from me.' Let this prayer be first in our hearts, whether we utter it in so many words or not. The clean heart and the right spirit are our first need; they are the evidences of the indwelling God. Then we are ready to converse with the Holy One in prayer with true sincerity.

But there are many who are more concerned

about knowing the scope of prayer in life, or how much they can obtain from God by prayer, than about the relation of prayer to natural law. The Scripture promises much here, and it is natural that men should be eager to know the extent of that promise. In the fifteenth chapter of Saint John's Gospel, the seventh verse, the promise is, 'If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.' The question in view of this statement, often is, Can we get whatever we ask for in prayer? The amusing thing which this question implies is our eagerness to bind God in advance — as by contract — to do whatever our own wisdom asks Him to do. But so far as I am able to see, the above passage does not warrant such a conclusion. Jesus never communed with God in prayer on any such basis.

The more essential things in this passage are the conditions it imposes rather than the promise. The significance of the 'If' with which it begins, and which is often overlooked by those who would get spiritually rich quickly, is tremendous. It requires no less than the living of the Christ-life. If this requirement is complied with, then the promise becomes sure. Those who have lived the Christ-life in every age have found it to be so.

If you are ready to say truthfully that your kingdom is not of this world; if you are ready to love

your enemies, to go about doing good, to minister, and not always expect to be ministered unto, to bless those who curse you and to pray for those who despitefully use you, to give your life to the lifting up of the lowly, the healing of the broken-hearted, the spiritual renewal of the sinner, and the rehabilitation of the outcast; if you love God with all your heart, and your neighbor as yourself, and always seek first his kingdom and his righteousness; if your conception of true life is that it is purity of heart, the promotion of peace, hunger and thirst after righteousness, and the trustful willingness to give your life, if need be, for the perpetuation of these ideals, then you abide in Christ and his words abide in you. These are the conditions. Furthermore, what the compliance with these demands will do for you, first of all, is that it will teach you how to pray and what you should ask for. You will learn when your prayer is *not* answered — as Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane, 'Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me,' was not answered — not to put your wisdom above God's wisdom, but to say, 'Not my will, but thy will be done.' You will be satisfied with your being on the side of God and in intimate communion with Him as your Father, and will trust Him to give or to withhold as He wills.

Prayer is not a contract with God. Prayer is the opening of the heart to Him, with all its aspirations,

needs, and anxieties. Its first and best fruits are the confidence, strength, and inspiration which true prayer never fails to bring. We shall have more on the subject of particular needs in the following chapters. At this point let us stress the idea of the essential character of prayer. Let us keep in mind that its first purpose is the reordering of our life and the spiritual renewal of our mind. The prayer of faith that we and all our concerns are within the purpose of the Ruler of the Universe, who is truth, and love, and righteousness, availeth much. It gives us the assurance that, notwithstanding our limited knowledge of their true meaning and significance, all our joys and sorrows, all our triumphs and defeats, all our perplexities and satisfactions, must work together for good, because they are within the divine plan.

CHAPTER XV

THE PRAYER OF MEDITATION

MEDITATION on any subject, whether good or bad, is intellectual and moral assimilation. Just as the assimilation of food converts it into living tissue in the physical organism, so does meditation convert the facts of knowledge into character. Whenever we dwell upon a thought intently and favorably, we proceed to make it part of ourselves. Meditation, then, is a mellowing process; it feeds, strengthens, and matures our powers.

In the world of knowledge the person we call a 'ripe scholar' is he who not only has gathered a host of facts, but who has contemplated the facts so long and so earnestly that he has become the very incarnation of the knowledge he possesses. Less contemplative thinkers may gather as many facts, yet fall short of the honor of ripe scholarship. Such minds may be called spacious receptacles of facts, but not living fountains of knowledge. Their conversations and their books are 'dry as dust.'

In the religious world the spiritual seer is he who through long and sympathetic meditation upon spiritual truth has become a 'living word.' His fellowship with the Spirit of Truth is so intimate that

he is able to say, 'I and the Father are one.' Less contemplative persons may know as many religious precepts, may be able to make convincing arguments in favor of the existence of God and the great worth and usefulness of religion, yet remain in a large sense strangers to this intimate fellowship and the deeper enjoyment of the spiritual life. Their appetite is good, but their assimilation is poor. They know God through rational deduction as a fact, but do not know Him affectionately as a Friend. We are never better nor worse than our cherished ideas. 'As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.' The ancients knew this law perfectly, hence the great stress they laid on meditation. 'Mine eyes,' said the psalmist, 'anticipated the night watches, that I might meditate on thy word.' Throughout the ages the various modes of meditation, whether in the secret chambers of the home, the niches of the temple, or the solitude of the hermitage, have had one object — the identifying of the soul with the deep things of God. It was out of such endeavors, out of such periods of profound spiritual contemplation, that the great scriptures of the world have come.

In the present age spiritual meditation is to millions of men and women a lost art. We are so hard-driven by our many devices and wants that we scarcely have time for even the poetizing and sweet-

ening of our social relations. The majority of our letters — when not of a business character — are signed, 'Hastily but truly yours.' Our religious life tells the same story. We have no lack of religious books, no lack of churches. But the majority of those interested in religion traverse its domain like hasty travelers. They have the laudable ambition perpetually to seek 'something new,' but do not tarry long enough in the newly discovered country to develop its resources and possess its riches. They forget also that the true is forever new; and that the real spiritual life is that which is not only broad, but deep and intense. The chief need of our own age is the deepening of its spiritual life. We need to discover this world of ours on its spiritual side and, through sympathetic meditation, become partakers of the divine nature.

Now the most essential condition to spiritual meditation is the unity of life in a supreme spiritual purpose. I say spiritual purpose rather than a spiritual philosophy, because I believe the former to be within the reach of all thinking people. The great and the small, the learned and the not learned, are capable of forming such a spiritual purpose as life's center of gravity. Vivifying spiritual meditation is almost as impossible to a scattered and fragmentary life as it is to atheism and agnosticism. Life with its profoundest sympathies

must first be centered in a high intent before one can profitably meditate. First the unshakable conviction, that we, the controllers of our physical part, are spiritual beings, must rule supreme in us before we can contemplate its significance. Religion demands the whole man. This insistent demand is frequently repeated in our Bible: 'Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, that seek him with the whole heart.' 'With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.' 'Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.' Nothing short of this centering of life in spiritual reality will open the individual's eyes to behold wondrous things out of God's law.

I have said that whenever we dwell upon a thought intently and favorably, we proceed to make it part of ourselves. If we so contemplate evil, we invite evil to dwell in our affections and ultimately rule over us; we become also its disseminators in the world. But if the object of our sincere and constant meditation is the good, then the good becomes the ruling and active power in our lives. Our meditation is our prayer, and as we are never inactive in this field, we pray without ceasing. The prayer of meditation, therefore, is either an elevating or a degrading act. We can pray ourselves upward or downward, according as our minds dwell

upon good or evil desires. Of course, when he said, 'Pray without ceasing,' the Apostle meant that men should pray in the spirit of Christ, with their affections set on the 'things above.' Else he might have said, 'Brethren, ye do pray without ceasing, therefore take heed how ye pray.' For, as a matter of fact, men do through desire pray constantly; they are being either ennobled by what they long for or degraded. It all depends upon what our eyes are furnished for, whether the permanent truth of God and the universal good of man or the narrow selfish desires.

We have in our Bible some of the loftiest contemplative prayers in religious literature. The Nineteenth Psalm is a voice from the high mount of vision. Its author turns to the heavens — as his time knew them — and they spread before him as a sacred scroll. He reads in them the law of the Eternal and contemplates it with reverential awe. His meditation upon them reveals to him the Power that holds the stars in their courses, and his thoughts of them acquire the tone of prayer. 'The heavens declare the glory of God,' he said to himself and, indirectly, to the ages, 'and the firmament showeth his handiwork.' The immensities become vocal to his listening soul; the Spirit of Being utters itself in the vast scene. 'Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge.'

Yet this speech is not meant for the physical ear, but for the inward sense; it is deep calling unto deep. 'There is no speech nor language; their voice is not heard.' Up to the sixth verse, the author surveys the vastness of the heavens and describes the going forth of the sun, 'which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber.' Then his thought heightens when he perceives the 'law' behind the scene.[1] He draws nearer to the creative power. The whole panorama acquires spiritual significance. It is not the law of gravitation which breaks upon his vision, but the active Will of the Divine Builder. The law which sustains the heavens is also the perfect law which 'restores the soul.' Man is no stranger to the universe; he is not an accident in the vast scheme of things, but is born of the life of God. So to man, 'the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; his commandments are pure, enlightening the eyes; his ordinances are true and righteous altogether.' The universe is a revealer of God's truth and righteousness. But the psalmist does not stop in his meditation at this generality. He is not only a philosophical spectator, but a worshiper. He lays his own soul open to the universal light, and applies God's precepts and command-

[1] The ancients made no such sharp distinction as we do to-day between the moral law and the physical law. The 'law of the Lord' or his will was to them all-embracing. I think they were right.

ments to his own life. It is one thing to see God's light in the sky, and quite another thing to allow it to search the deeps of our own being. The psalmist does both. He owns the divine precepts and commandments as the law of his own life. 'Moreover,' he cries, 'by them is thy servant warned, and in keeping of them there is great reward.' Here his prayer changes from meditation into petition and thus becomes more intimate. He asks to be kept back from those seductive 'hidden faults' and 'presumptuous' sins — the sins of the 'proud.' The majesty and purity and sweetness of God's law and precepts, as revealed to his inward eye, lead this man to conclude his prayer with the expression of one supremely inclusive desire: 'Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.'

The writer of the Twenty-Third Psalm cuts for us a gem of spiritual thought in another prayer of meditation. His use of the figure of the shepherd does not, as some lofty critics assert, make a sheep of him. He speaks here as a poet. No one who has watched a shepherd tending his flock can fail to perceive the exquisiteness of the psalmist's usage. The unremitting watchfulness of the shepherd over his flock, his tender care in protecting it and guiding it to green pastures and the refreshing streams of

water, and the trust of the flock in their guide whatever the circumstances, even when passing through the dark valleys where wild beasts are wont to dwell, make a picture of peacefulness and contentment worthily expressive of the repose of the trustful soul in the embrace of God.

So, the psalmist, retiring for the moment from a world of conflicts and corroding cares, into the sanctuary of spiritual meditation, finds that with God there is everlasting peace. Neither want nor danger can harm the God-centered soul. He begins his prayer with 'The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want,' and ends it with 'Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.' Here is perfect trust in the designs of the Eternal Goodness. Would that this feverish age of ours inscribed this prayer in its inmost heart; that it realized that such a faith in the goodness of God must underlie all noble endeavor, and that no other possession can give the soul of man real contentment and lasting peace.

Another prayer of meditation which I wish to mention here is that found in the One Hundred and Thirty-Ninth Psalm. Here the ancient author, mingling thanksgiving with his meditation, speaks of the omnipresence of God. He begins with his own heart; he feels the mysterious presence within.

His trust is so complete that he is not afraid to say, 'O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me.' He does not seem to himself to peek into the Holy of Holies through the keyhole with shallow curiosity; he dwells there. Nothing stands between him and the All-Seeing. It is his whole soul that speaks when he says, 'Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in the grave, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall guide me.' He sees the guiding hand of God in the evolution of his whole being. 'Thou didst cover me in my mother's womb. I will give thanks unto thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.' He rises from contemplation to communion. The *thoughts* of God become to him the bread and wine of the sacrament. 'How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them! When I awake, I am still with thee.'

Such meditations are decisive battles: they are triumphant spiritual invasions of our mundane order. The soul that can so meditate upon the deep things of God is amply fortified against all doubt and fear.

Here we can see also that the prayer of meditation is not, as many assert, mere auto-suggestion. This mode of thinking — auto-suggestion — is universal among men, and is useful in many ways. It is the chief means of garnering our experiences, whether in the field of prayer or any other. But true prayer is not mere introspection and communion with one's own thoughts. We do not acquire fresh spiritual power by simply revolving our own ideas and rehearsing our regrets. Excessive indulgence in this sort of meditation is certain to turn into morbidness and to cause discouragement. You cannot cool and freshen the air in a tightly closed room through the action of an electric fan. Nor can you enrich your mind by conversing with yourself only. In the one case you need to have access to the atmosphere of the world, and in the other, to human society.

Prayer is our means of access to the Infinite Life. Its chief function is to *lift us out* of ourselves and to enable us to establish universal relations. By mere auto-suggestion we cut ourselves off from such relations and hug our own sterile ideas. Our world of to-morrow can be no bigger than that of to-day, although it may be the same old world grown distressingly familiar. We remain in a state of constant self-defense, and never can rise to self-fulfillment. Another difference between prayer and

auto-suggestion may be likened to the difference between studying a music lesson and listening to a concert. There may be inspiration and pleasure in studying a music lesson — although the students of this art do not, as a general rule, admit this — but a grand concert lifts the soul above the vexations of technic and into the vast world of spiritual harmony. We are enlarged under the spell in a way which passeth all understanding. We seem to dwell on high, with all the world of petty cares under our feet.

Such is the function of prayer. It is to enlarge and purify our souls through communion with God. It is not dipping into our own little cup of thought and feeling, but reaching, with perfect trust that we shall receive, into the treasures of the Great Giver.

The prayer of meditation, then — such prayer as those we have reviewed — serves to annex to our little individual world the hidden regions of reality. By meditating upon this universe as the revelation of God, we are becoming more and more controlled, illumined, and guided by the Spirit of God. We are being transformed into the likeness of that which we so devoutly contemplate. It becomes natural for us to join the psalmist in proclaiming blessed the man whose 'delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law doth he meditate day and night.'

CHAPTER XVI

THE PRAYER OF PETITION

Of the many types of prayer the one that is most widely discussed is the prayer of petition. This is so because, first, the prayer of petition is the most natural, most intimate kind of prayer, and, second, because it is supposed to involve the greatest difficulty.

It is in relation to this prayer that the question, 'Is prayer answered?' is most often asked. Nor is it limited to those who do not 'believe' in prayer of any sort. Even those who do or would pray are often perplexed about the efficacy of their petitionary prayers. The answer to them does not seem in their experience to be unfailing. The question as to whether the prayer of man can change the mind and plans of God seems unanswerable. All the generations seem to have wrestled with this dark question in vain, and it remains with us a mystery beyond the hope of penetration.

I do not pretend to be able to give a satisfactory solution to this age-old problem; nor do I believe that human speculation ever can find out whether prayer or any other spiritual act of man can change God's plan or not. In fact, no finite mind has ever

found out to perfection what God's plan is. So the assertion that prayer does not change the Divine Mind can claim no superiority over the assertion that it does. Either opinion is an adventure of faith.

This being the case, it seems to me that the weightier of the two opinions is the opinion of those who pray, and not those who only speculate upon what prayer can or cannot do. In the world of speculation, the possible and the impossible are often hopelessly confused with each other. Not infrequently the more thorough expert of the two disputants, in the use of words in a speculative debate, wins the victory regardless of the facts. So the final test of any given theory, especially where the actualities of life are concerned, is not argument, but action. Nor are those who have discovered the 'immutability of law' in the physical world to be accepted as supreme judges of what does or does not take place in the spiritual world. Only long spiritual experience can throw any light on this subject. I should not go, for correct information concerning the law of mechanics, to a mystic who has not studied the science; nor should I go, for correct information concerning the law of prayer, to an engineer who has given little or no attenton to the subject of religion.

The physicists and biologists and behaviorists

occupy positions of honor and leadership in their respective fields. The most highly honored of them are those who restrict themselves to the things which their methods and tools are fit to deal with and who do not deny the reality of the spiritual world simply because their methods cannot explain it. We must own them as our guides in the tangible world, but cannot so accept their authority in the realm of spiritual values. Here our guides and instructors are men of a different stamp. For information on the subject of prayer we should go to Jesus and Paul and Augustine and Francis of Assisi and Luther and Wesley and Channing and their spiritual kindred — those who have lived with God in faith and prayer, and known their potency and power. And when we come to these explorers of the spiritual world and friends of God, we find that what appears to others to be a stumbling-block is to them 'the power of God unto salvation.' They do not even hint at the idea that the prayer of petition presumes to change God's plan and put Him in subjection to man's will. They seem assured that the soul's petition and the granting of it by the Father of Spirits are *included* in his design. This form of prayer is to them the filial language of the soul that is conscious of its divine origin, and not an obligation imposed by man upon God — a command which He must obey.

A good parent is always ready to favor the requests of his children, but his superior wisdom may prevent him from so doing in every instance. Nor is the occasional refusal of a good parent to grant the requests of his children ever meant to quench the desire in them for making such requests. For what parent would want his children to be like dumb animals, with no budding wants, no rising aspirations, and no will of their own as free beings; and to remain content with whatever is given to them? Nor does the asking for things by a child of his parent stamp the child a beggar and the parent a fickle person whose life is devoid of plan and purpose. On the contrary, it shows that in the parent's life law is love, and love is law. The opening of our heart with all its needs to God in prayer is an essential part of our training in aspiration. It teaches us that we live in a responsive universe and commune with a coöperative Spirit. As in the case of our human parents, when we 'make our requests known to God,' we identify ourselves with Him and consciously claim our divine heritage.

But is not the prayer of petition destined to disappear with the advance of knowledge? Not a few in our own time answer this question in the affirmative. Yes, certain types of the prayer of petition will and should disappear. Habitual begging is no more beneficial and respectable in the spiritual

world than in the physical world. In either sphere it tends to dull the edge of husbandry and to degrade character. Whenever we presume to ask God to do for us what we are able to do for ourselves; whenever we ask God to gratify our selfish desires and give us the ascendancy over our fellow men, then we reduce Him in our minds to an under-secretary, and our prayer becomes theft. Many public prayers offered by ministers of religion in most solemn tones are of this sort. In such cases, the minister, feeling that the order of service in his church calls for a 'long prayer,' gives himself to the issuing of such a series of instructions to God as some have aptly called 'a stump speech delivered to the Almighty.' The Controller of Destiny is told in minutest detail what He must do and give in order that this world may become what the wordy suppliant thinks it should be. Listening to such a prayer, the intelligent hearer is tempted to wonder whether the preacher has not exchanged places with God and assumed direction of the affairs of the universe.

Yet, notwithstanding all this, it seems utterly irrational to conclude that the prayer of petition is useless or that it ever will cease to be offered. From what we know of the tendencies of the human soul, we are compelled to believe that men never will or can be content with meditating on God's law and

contemplating his works, without asking his help and desiring his gifts. We do not deal in this manner with our human superiors and our true friends. We are never satisfied with contemplating and admiring the native gifts and attainments of great scholars in any field. Our very admiration for them leads to the inevitable feeling on our part that they have something to give which we need to have. Their very greatness convinces us that our desire to ask of them can be no keener than their desire to grant our petition. Their abundance is ever ready to meet our need, and by asking of them, the abundance fills the need. So it is in the case of our friends. We are never content with the mere poetizing of their charms. We commune with them, ask of them, and are helped by them.

I do not believe that a human being ever contemplated the universe as the manifestation of God without at the same time desiring and asking for God's help. And it is not the quality of the petition that I am considering here, but its inevitableness. It seems to me to be the irresistible gravitation of the lesser toward the greater, and of need toward abundance. No negative opinion of the prayer of petition can withstand the pressure of this tendency. Men will always direct their petitions to God simply because they cannot help doing so. The whole process encourages the belief that the soul

seems to perceive that its relation to God is that of an heir, and not a servant; that whatever God has to give, it has the right to ask for. Its very petition indicates that it is not indifferent to its right of being of the household of God.

We have seen in the preceding chapter how the author of the Nineteenth Psalm was led, through the prayer of meditation, to the prayer of petition. It was natural that he should not remain satisfied with his contemplation of the heavens as the work of God, and the conviction that his law was true and righteous. He concluded by asking the Mighty Builder of the heavens to be the purifier of his heart: to help him to conquer the 'hidden faults' and the 'presumptuous sins,' and so to direct the words of his mouth and the meditation of his heart as that they might be acceptable in his sight.

The Fifty-First Psalm is a most intimate and ardent petitionary prayer. It is a real heart-searching utterance. Its object is the cleansing and purification of the temple of the soul. Its sound is the sound of a severe inner struggle in which the petitioner seems to have found himself hard-pressed and in need of reënforcements. He turns to God with an openness of confession which is itself a great victory. He throws himself into the Everlasting Arms and cries, 'Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness: according to the

multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.' He feels that sin of any sort is an offense against his own soul, against mankind, and against God. What else can sin be? Can we view it in any other way even in this 'enlightened' age? Have mercy upon me, 'for I know my transgressions; and my sin is ever before me.' The center of life is within, and around this center it revolves with all its cares and ambitions. This he recognizes with heroic courage and childlike simplicity, and cries again as one looking into the face of God, 'Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden part thou wilt make me to know wisdom.' The crowning petition of this prayer expresses the central need of human nature, which is, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.'

In the New Testament, the great petitionary prayers are the Lord's Prayer and Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane.[1] The Lord's Prayer opens with the recognition of God as Father, 'Our Father,' and a word of adoration, 'Hallowed be thy name'; the remainder consists of petitions. Three of those petitions, 'Give us this day our daily bread, forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation,' present difficulties to many people. The petition for

[1] Luke xxii, 42.

daily bread is considered to be 'material' and selfish; asking God to forgive us as *we* forgive is thought to be extremely limited because if God forgave us in no greater degree than we forgive those who offend against us, then we are in a sad state. And *does* God lead us into temptation?

I do not propose here to give a lengthy exposition of this prayer. What I wish to say is that I am utterly unable to see why we should consider prayer for material things to be selfish. Are our bodies of no worth and no significance? Have our material needs no vital relation to our spiritual endeavor? Has God made a mistake in clothing us with physical bodies? Obviously we cannot answer these questions in the affirmative. Our physical life is the basis of our existence in this world, and its needs occupy the major part of our time. Do not they, therefore, fall within God's plan; or shall we assign them to 'Cæsar'? The Lord's Prayer presupposes that God is the Giver of all good — spiritual and material. Is not the World-Life the feeder of our bodies as well as the nourisher of our souls? I do not say that any rational being would fold his hands and wait for God to supply his daily needs, nor does the Lord's Prayer contemplate any such thing.[1] Nor does our prayer for such necessities need to or

[1] See, on the petition for daily bread, my book, *The Syrian Christ*, p. 196. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston.

should be always spoken. But when we go about seeking our daily needs with the faith in our hearts that we are being guided by divine light, that we are not alone in wrestling with the problems of the day, but that God is with us, we are praying all the time and are better qualified to seek and to use the things we need. Our petition, therefore, spoken or unspoken, is our constant trust in the Divine Giver. If our prayer for material things can justly be called selfish, our prayer for spiritual comforts can hardly escape the same condemnation. Either prayer is meant to improve our lot and to give us joy and peace. And, needless to say, in either case we are selfish, if we ask for mere personal enjoyment, and not for the purpose of being better equipped to serve both God and man.

As to the petition, 'Forgive us, as we forgive,' we are not left in the dark. The meaning and intent of the passage is not that our inclination to forgive should be God's rule and criterion. It is rather that, if we come to God with an unforgiving spirit, we must not expect Him to be our accomplice and to shower his blessings upon us. Even if God should forgive our unforgiving, we should not be prepared to receive his gift, our hearts being occupied with contrary motives. God will not help us to do evil. So we must forgive, if we would be forgiven; and love, if we would be loved.

The petition, 'Lead us not into temptation,' in all probability echoes an ancient Hebrew thought which later Judaism and Christianity changed. The change came about through the acquirement of the idea of Satan by the Hebrews from the Persians — an idea which Christianity inherited. To the Christians, Satan is the tempter, and not God. To the ancient Hebrews, God had no rival in such a being as Satan is said to be. God alone gave the good and inflicted evil, as it suited his purpose. Thus says the Scripture:[1] 'I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I am the Lord, that doeth all these things.' He it was who smote his people with all manner of evil whenever they deserved punishment. He led his people into evil in order to make them taste its bitter fruit and thus turn into the way of righteousness. So this petition, 'Lead us not into temptation,' is in the same class with 'Let not sin have dominion over me.' The quest in either prayer is divine protection.

It is obvious that, taking the problem of evil with all its bearings on human thought, this explanation does not wholly do away with the difficulty, but it indicates the origin of the prayer before us. However, it is essential for us to keep in mind the fact that Jesus does not enjoin the *form*

[1] Is. xlv, 6–7.

of the Lord's Prayer upon his followers. '*After this manner* pray ye' is his admonition, and not 'This is the *form* of prayer ye should use.' It seems that what the Master had in mind was the brevity of the Prayer — as contrasted with 'vain repetition' — and its inclusiveness, and not its form. This appears to be evident from the fact that the Prayer is shorter in Luke [1] than in Matthew, and, according to the Revised Version, Luke omits the petition, 'Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.' So, if we prefer to think with the Apostle [2] that 'God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man; but every man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lusts and enticed,' let us feel free to treat this troublesome petition according to our own conscience. Perhaps the saying, '*Leave* us not in temptation,' would better answer our need for seeking God's help when temptations threaten our peace.

Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane is a superb example of the prayer of petition: 'Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine be done.' In these eighteen words we have the essence of Jesus' biography. They are a revelation of his life from its deepest depth to its highest height. This eighteen-word prayer tells the secret of the Great Teacher's power and ministry as

[1] Luke xi, 2–4; Matt. vi, 9–13. [2] James i, 13.

nothing else can. We know now why in all his struggles against entrenched, iniquitous privilege which seemed utterly immovable; why, when mocked by a heedless world, ridiculed, beaten, deserted, and finally led to the very gate of death, He was never discouraged. His gains were small, and his cause seemed hopeless; yet the supreme test, when it came, found him true to his vision of the triumph of good over evil. The Secret which is not of an age, but of all the ages, was deep in his heart: *With God there is no defeat!* He who was made perfect through suffering and attained Divine Sonship had a clear vision of this. His was to bear witness to this eternal truth. The slow march of progress and its ultimate issue were to him in the Father's keeping. Toil, triumph, defeat, joy, sorrow, worship, service, were all included in the divine plan. The Higher Will embraced time and eternity. Jesus' life was a preparation for the prayer of Gethsemane, and that prayer a revelation of that life. His cry of need, which was nobly and tenderly human, and his unreserved trust in the Father, sublimely reveals the divine origin of the Soul.

This is the true type of petitionary prayer. It is not begging for trivial and petty things, not a form of contract which God is asked to agree to, regardless of his wisdom, nor a test case whose purpose is to satisfy one's curiosity to know whether prayer is

ever answered or not. The Master's life harbored none of these shallow desires. The hour of deepest necessity was to him the hour of most intimate communion with the Father, regardless of whether the answer from on high was 'Yes' or 'No.' In either case it *was* an answer. So the prayer of Gethsemane was an act of communion which made clear Jesus' oneness with the Father and his perfect submission to his beneficent will.

We have no higher example to follow in our prayer. Be our needs what they may, let us come with them to God and speak to Him as spirit to spirit. This is our right, as it is our privilege; for we are his offspring. If our prayer brings us into closer communion with Him, it brings us every good thing.

CHAPTER XVII

PRAYER AND CHARACTER

A PERSON'S character is the sum of his sentiments or tendencies — love, hate, generosity, selfishness, and other sentiments. The basic and most powerful element of character is desire: it is the spring of all action. We are moved by desire to seek and to own, to build or to destroy, to be friends or enemies of our fellow men. Our dominant desire is the measure of what we are.

Desire is the motive power of action, or experience, and experience the educator of desire. Education is meant to give us a wider acquaintance with the world in which we live, and to tame, refine, and tone our desires. Civilized man differs from the savage, not only in his having a greater diversity of desires with his wider knowledge, but purer and loftier desires than the savage has. The springs of action in him are purer and sweeter. And while the highest function of knowledge is to refine desire, it does not become life in us until it is charged with desire — until it becomes a driving passion. Where experience remains a fact of pure knowledge and no more, then resolution sickens and dies. The great powers which fashion our world for us, for good or ill, are rooted and grounded in desire.

Here, then, the important bearing of prayer upon character becomes very evident. Prayer as the soul's sincere desire deals, first of all, with this primitive passion in us — our supreme desire. It is training for spiritual living. True prayer, which we may justly call Christian prayer, is communion with the All-Pure. It calls us, first of all, to purity of heart — to be like Him to whom we pray. Our religion requires of us when we pray to put away all evil from us, to set the heart aright, to forgive, to entertain no violent passions, but to cast them out as the works of darkness. Can any one overestimate the beneficial influence on character of constancy in such an attitude of prayer? It is hard to imagine a greater enemy to character than a violent, lawless desire. How often the nobler traits of a person's character are marred by the irruption of such a hidden, antagonistic force. It has been rightly said that we never know fully what we really are. And it is certain that because of this fact, all those who have known the great influence of prayer upon character have admonished men to pray without ceasing — constantly to desire the true, the good, and the beautiful. The wrestling with our rebellious desires in secret prayer, when none but God is near, is the most effective means of converting those enemies of character into friends.

I am convinced that when Jesus bade his hearers

pray in secret, He had in mind not only the avoidance of show and pretense and the desire 'to be seen of men,' but the superiority of the effect of secret prayer upon character over that of public prayer, even when the latter is sincere. Like love, prayer is weakened by publicity. Even in public prayer as it is offered at our church services, and whose highest purpose is our '*uniting* in prayer' as a congregation, each one is supposed to be either offering a prayer himself or making his own the prayer offered from the pulpit. In either case, the habit of praying in secret is what gives richness and spontaneity to public prayer.

'Secret prayer is the fountain of all others. Where there is no habit of private communion with God, there will be no earnestness in public prayer. It will be formal, dry, and consist in endless repetitions of customary phrases. The life of religion in the soul consists in habitual communion with God, in gratitude, in supplication, in "the flight of one alone to the Only One." This hidden inner life must be maintained in its fullness by constant prayer, and thus it will flow out easily into all the acts of public devotion and active goodness. But when this inner life stagnates, then the outward acts of devotion become formal and rigid, and the man is like a tree, hollow at the heart, which still may maintain an outward languid show of life; or like an olive-tree

dead at the root, which still may bear "two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof."

'Secret prayer is the sign and the food of this inner life. Its sign — for this life is love, and where love exists, it will express itself. . . . Its food — for such communion opens the soul to receive new life flowing into it from God, and prayer is the door through which the bread and wine of the soul are brought in.' [1]

Not only does prayer purify character by purifying desire, but it tends also to elevate character. Evil desires lead downward by constantly narrowing the vision and polluting the imagination. They press for gratification and leave no regard for the higher values. The prisoner of such desires is always ready to sell his birthright for a mess of pottage. Constructive spiritual ideals, and the ennobling responsibilities they carry with them, mean nothing to him. Prayer is a lifting power. Our habitual, sincere communion with God cannot fail to give us a higher conception of life and being in general. It cannot fail to give the world around us and human life sacred significance. Through prayer we glimpse a higher purpose in all things, and hope,

[1] James Freeman Clarke: *The Christian Doctrine of Prayer*, pp. 141–42. The Beacon Press, Boston.

faith, and love rise within us and conquer fear, doubt, and hatred.

We have a striking example of this in the influence which association with a noble human personality exerts upon us. Such a personality is certainly the clearest and highest revelation we have of God on earth. It is his noblest work. In the presence of a person whose nobleness of character marks him for us as our ideal of a human being, the noblest that is in us asserts itself with power and might. We are raised above ourselves in a mysterious way. Our standard of values is heightened and our confidence in human nature is increased. We find ourselves possessed by the thought that, in spite of all its defects and stumblings and fallings, if this humanity of ours has produced only a few thousand such men and women, it must be pronounced a success!

If this, then, is our state of mind in the presence of a noble human personality — which with all its greatness can give us but a glimpse of the Fuller Life, whose urge is still creating the ever-nobler type of man — can we doubt that the soul's vision of the Divine Original must be higher and more ennobling? As we have already said, we must trust the testimony of those who have 'seen.' So the higher elevation into which the prayer of communion lifts us not only raises the level of our character,

but assures us that in spite of the clouds and darkness which still obstruct our vision of the end, with God there is no defeat!

Prayer gives character unity: it draws the self from its contentions with the problems of life and puts it together again. The most pronounced tendency of our highly complex life is the tendency to scatter. We are constantly dealing with partial things, with fragments. Our reading is, as a general rule, aimless browsing. We are forever after 'something to read.' The newspaper, the periodical, and the story-book are the pasture land for the multitude. Both the quantity and the quality of this sort of literature forever tends to prevent concentration. We seem to be seeking to satisfy the demands of a curious intellect rather than to build up within us a spiritual center for our life to revolve around. The economic stress under which we are living tends more to distract than to compose our minds. Our nerves seem to be uncovered and exposed to every influence, and our production falls short of meeting our ever-expanding wants. Fatigue drives us to play, and need drives us back to work.

It would seem that for rational beings capable of fostering high ideals, life should have a sanctuary where it may gather its scattered and jaded faculties together and reassert its supremacy over the world of things. Now, worship's highest function is

to do this very thing — to unite and renew the powers of character. Prayer — the very heart of worship — draws us from the field of action to the spiritual training camp to be refitted for the work of life. In its school we learn not only to be strong, but to be true and good — to relate all partial things to the great Whole of our spiritual being and make them serve the good purpose of God in us. 'To be carnally minded is death; to be spiritually minded is life and peace.' Death scatters, life unites. Prayer is life; the act of prayer is the affirmation of our oneness with the Source of life, and our constant protest against spiritual decay and death. It gives wholeness in place of partiality, harmony in place of discord, and the everlasting Yea in place of the everlasting Nay.

True prayer widens our vision and establishes for us universal relations. Nothing saps the life and vitality of character like a narrow vision. Lawless passion is so devastating because the first thing it does is to cut its victim off from the wider relations of life. It completely shuts out the light and gorges itself in darkness. No one surrenders to such passion without first ignoring the bearing of his deed upon his own character and the wider law of mutualities in the domestic and social life. But for the ignoring or ignorance of these ideal relations, the thief would not steal, nor the murderer kill, nor the

adulterer commit his sin. The idealization and spiritualization of these connections make the inhibition vastly stronger than the desire. Setting the affections on things above raises self-respect to conquering power and gives the assurance that,

> Though passion's fires are in thy soul,
> Thy spirit can their flame control;
> Though tempters strong beset thy way,
> Thy spirit is more strong than they.

The practical difference between the great and the ordinary among men is this: the great view life in the light of its universal laws and interests, while the ordinary remain buried in their own present interests. His vision of the universal good lifts the great man above the narrow circle of 'I' and 'mine,' and his lack of this vision keeps the ordinary man's self in his own way. His trivial desires, his little enmities, his burning jealousies, his cheap pleasures, and his grudge against the world, fill his mind and his time. By this distinction I do not mean to divide mankind into rich and poor, learned and unlearned, socially distinguished and socially obscure, and call the first great and the second small. No. Whoever has this vision of the universal good and, according to the light he has, strives to serve the universal good, takes his place in his own right among the world builders. The line of cleavage here regards this soul quality. It runs among the poets,

the preachers, the statesmen, the artisans, and all other classes of men. The great poet is he who lifts us up above the mean and petty concerns of life to the high mount of vision, while the ordinary versifier entangles us in his own likes and dislikes and annoys us by his 'temperamental' attitudes. The great preacher sails with us in the main channel of life and, with noble self-forgetfulness and freedom from all bias and ill will, leads us to the essentials of spiritual truth and the domain of good will, while the ordinary preacher is forever driven by his narrow dogmatic tendencies and sectarian bias to the shallows of the stream of life and stirring up the mud in his wake. We seem to ourselves to grow smaller under him and to become more inclined to hate than to love. So also is the difference between the great statesman whose abilities are consecrated to the service of the State regardless of personal advantage, and the mercenary politician who lives to seek his own. In whatever walk of life, the men and the women who merit our reverential regard are those whose acts as well as thoughts and words are governed by their consciousness of the universal good. 'These teach us the qualities of primary nature — admit us to the constitution of things.'

Now, prayer is not the only means of access to the domain of good will. Educational and social experiences may lead in that direction. But prayer

here is of central importance. To be with God in prayer is to touch the primal source of all that is true, good, and beautiful, and to experience the most searching self-examination. Once this contact is established in a person's inward part, his good will toward men ceases to be a mere prudent measure whose end and purpose is the safeguarding of self-interest by serving others' interest. We may serve others and still be selfish — if the further goal of our service is nothing more than to make others promote our own ambitions and gains. These are the tactics of the proverbial 'ward politician.' Good will is man's will joined to God's will. And as our conception of God is that He is the impartial giver of good, the joining of our will to his higher will universalizes our sympathies and our interest in the good of our fellow men. Then, like the Master, we will consecrate ourselves not only for our own sake, but for their sake also. We will pray for others because we are one with them as children of God; we will pray for friend and foe because we would have no enemies, but would have good will rule supreme in the world. The law and the gospel of life for us become the worship of God and the service of men.

In these chapters on prayer, we have frequently said that prayer may be spoken or unspoken. In a real sense, however, prayer is always put into words. The creatures which have not the gift of

speech act according to desire, but cannot give their desires word forms. But man's desires and thoughts are never known to him without such forms. He may not always be able to give such states of thought and feeling correct word forms, but neither can he experience them without thinking of them as his own states, and he cannot think without words, whether he utters his thoughts or not. Prayer may be only a reasoned attitude spoken only subjectively. But such a prayer is only half expressed, and the desire for it is likely to become dormant with the passing of time. Ardent desires are never permanently speechless. They always tend toward expression, either in words, song, or bodily movements. Utterance adds force and gives firmer fixity to thought and desire in our nature. Whenever we want to understand an idea more clearly and to secure a firmer hold upon it, we repeat it again and again in words; we utter it aloud. This rule obtains in the domain of prayer as in any other sphere of thought. Utterance makes prayer more truly our own and commits us more deeply to its obligations than when it is unspoken. For speech is action which greatly strengthens thought.

So bodily attitude and speech are reënforcements to prayer, as they are to good manners in social intercourse. They attune both the body and the mind to spiritual harmony. Therefore, to say that

prayer may be without words is to indicate that the attitude of the heart in prayer is of primary importance, but not to belittle the significance of uttered prayer. When the heart thrills with the desire for communion with God, let not the tongue withhold its offering of reverential speech. Let the words of the mouth *and* the meditation of the heart together form the sweet melody of prayer.

CHAPTER XVIII

QUESTIONING THE HEREAFTER

It has been said with much reason, I think, that in the end all writing is autobiographical. That whatever an author gives the public must inevitably contain much of the history of his own thoughts and sentiments. This is especially true of what we call creative writers — such as writers of fiction, and those who deal with philosophical, religious, and moral subjects.

The subject of immortality which this chapter is meant to present is of the above class of writing. However extensive its presentation and however inclusive of others' opinions it may be, the writer's conclusions in this field must ultimately rest on his own conviction with regard to the state of the soul after death. Here for the intellect the objective is veiled in mystery; only faith, resting on rational deduction, may own that objective as a reality. Except in the case of those to whom 'spirit return' is an actual, apprehensible thing, the acceptance of the survival of the soul after death as a fact is an act of faith. Here, if anywhere, we are bound to say with the poet,

> We have but faith, we cannot know,
> For knowledge is of things we see.

But I do not believe that the assertion that belief in immortality rests on men's desire to make a reality of what they 'wish were true' is an adequate explanation of the situation. The truth seems to be that the deductions of reason and the urge of faith compel men to conclude that the survival of the soul after death *must* be a fact.

Now, whatever autobiographical coloring the other topics dealt with in this work may reflect, I mean to make this chapter strictly a personal testimony.

I will first say, then, that since modern knowledge reveals this universe as a living whole, and not as a heap of inert, unrelated fragments, I have found it most reasonable to conclude that the life of this universe must be what all the generations of men have called God. I might very properly give this central reality some other name, but the term 'God,' with its rich spiritual associations, seems to me to be the best designation I could give that reality. My conception of the human soul also is spiritual — that it is a spiritual entity, and not a function of the brain, which is bound to cease when the brain collapses. I relate the soul to the body as I relate God to the universe: the soul is the master and the controller of the body, and is not involved in its decay.

It would seem that in the preceding paragraph

I have given my full testimony in favor of the doctrine of immortality, and that I should say no more. Yes; but that is not the way the biography of an idea is written. The bare outline of an accepted doctrine leaves out of consideration its struggles for survival, and the many other alternatives which should be considered. I have not been free from the great difficulties which in the minds of other men beset the belief in immortality, nor have I thought it just and reasonable to consider the other theories of immortality than my own, and the objections of unbelievers in personal immortality, to be unworthy of serious consideration. I fully realize that the belief in personal immortality is a great and bold adventure of faith in the face of what seems to be an impenetrable mystery. But I have made this adventure together with unnumbered millions of men and find it to rest on a firm rational foundation.

I have listened with sympathy and respect to those who say that the thought of immortality is none of our concern in this life; that we should go on and live our life according to the best light we have, and let post-mortem things take care of themselves. Many among men have been able to take such an indifferent attitude toward the idea of immortality and to consider it wholly a post-mortem thing, but I have not been able to do so. I have never been able to make it seem reasonable

that our short existence in this world comprises the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end of the history of the human soul. Death to me is not the terminus of human existence, but is a grand event in the course of spiritual progress. I can no more think that this life 'is all' than that our solar system is the only world in the vast immensities of the universe. Nor do I find a definite line of cleavage between this world and another. To the soul existence is one — one royal highway of a vast destiny. Immortality is not a 'post-mortem thing' exclusively; it is a term we give to our true spiritual life now and evermore. This being my belief, I find it impossible to let the thought of immortality alone, as though it were of no importance whatever. Since I am unable to remain indifferent to the significance of human activities and aspirations in this life, I am bound to think even more earnestly about the ultimate meaning of human life as a whole. The question, 'Is death a leap into eternal darkness and silence, or a waking into another morn?' I find that I cannot ignore. To me it is not merely an occasion for intellectual gymnastics, but for the appraisal of moral values. It has a strong bearing on character and the conduct of life.

I do not mean by the foregoing that the thought of immortality should be our meditation day and night. Nor would I say that if we did not believe

in immortality we would proceed to kill one another, or to commit suicide. No. The expediences of life do not wait on our views of the hereafter. The creative power has not left life and destiny wholly in our keeping. Love of life and the essential needs for its continuance are deeper than our curious seeing can fathom. The ancient Hebrews, for example, lived hundreds of years with only the dimmest conception of immortality. Their view of it was selective — God chose a few of their righteous men, such as Enoch and Elijah, and 'took' them up to heaven. The rest of men continued a shadowy, meaningless existence after death in the Underworld.

Later Jewish thought, however, changed materially this conception, and the change marked an advance in Jewish philosophy. This was due, not only to the closer and more sympathetic contact of the Jews with Persian and Greek culture, but also to the inevitable deepening, with the passing of time, of philosophical thinking among the 'chosen people' themselves. Chastened by the tribulations and anguish of many centuries, during which the royal scepter was wrested from them and their righteous men subjected to bitter persecution, the Jews sought the meaning of human existence in the life of the individual, and not only in the life of the nation. Then they found the immortality of

the soul to be 'the logical sequel of the God idea, inasmuch as God's faithfulness seemed to point to the realization of those higher expectations which are sown, as part of its very nature, in every human soul.'[1] It will be seen here that the idea of immortality was affirmed, not merely as an assurance of continued existence after death, but as a basis of hope for the realization 'of those higher expectations' which pertain to moral values.

My study of, and reflection on, this subject have led me to believe that, whatever may have been the ground of the hope of immortality in its dim beginning, it has persisted with the human race in all the stages of culture, not only because of man's love for continued existence, but because of his longing to find life's ultimate meaning. No doubt love of life in the individual, through which Nature exercises her maternal care for the type, has played an important part in the development of this hope. But its deeper root is man's conception of spiritual values as soul possessions which it does not seem reasonable to him are born to die. This also is my faith. And since what we call ideals and values can exist only as qualities and possessions of personality, I hold that only personal immortality can guarantee the conservation of those qualities which make our earthly life so good and beautiful. I am

[1] The Jewish Encyclopedia.

utterly unable to believe that the ultimate destiny of the soul and its ideals is to be cast as rubbish to the void, or to be dissolved in the primal substance of the universe. To me, therefore, any theory of life which rejects or ignores this type of immortality is a cry of failure and despair.

Nevertheless, I have given serious attention to the other doctrines of immortality, which I have been obliged to reject, and which I will present as fully as the limits of this chapter will permit. The first of these is what I would call the doctrine of atomic immortality. This rests on the theory that man is a biological organism whose consciousness or so-called 'soul' is a function of the brain. Modern chemistry reveals to a very gratifying extent the molecular changes which produce the state of consciousness, and experimental psychology recognizes and publishes the grand result. So long as the human organism remains whole and its vital organs function properly, life and consciousness will continue. As soon as the unity of the body is broken up and the brain collapses, death ensues, and the light of consciousness is put out. Then what we call 'personality,' with all its motives, aspirations, joys, sorrows, ceases to exist. Here the logic is simple and clear. Not having a substantial existence of its own, a function cannot survive the death of the organism which gives it expression.

Yet even here an attempt is made to dole out a crumb of comfort to the questioning mind. Even here the term 'immortality' is borrowed and clothed with a 'modern' meaning. We are assured that nothing that actually exists ever will or can be destroyed. All being is immortal. The atoms of which the human organism is made up know no death. They existed before they entered into this peculiar structure and they will exist in some form after this structure is destroyed. We are admonished not to be so doleful as to think of those atoms as 'blown about the desert dust, or sealed within the iron hills,' but as liberated by death and entering into the vast structure of the universe.

All this, however, is quite strange to the thought of human immortality. It is strange, not only because the purely suppositional transformation of chemical activity into thought and volition requires infinitely more credulity than the assumption that the soul of man is a spiritual entity capable of surviving the death of the body, but because it completely ignores the basic idea of the ultimate significance of human life. Leaving out for the present moment the thought of comfort and consolation which belief in the immortality of the soul is supposed to give, and viewing this theory of atomic immortality from a purely rational standpoint, one finds that it 'puzzles the will.' Can it

be, one is bound to ask, that Nature's business is forever to build mud houses and destroy them? The building-up of atoms into human organisms, the dissolving of human organisms into atoms, the repetition of the process for untold æons, and, finally, the resolving of all things into atoms to whirl and vibrate from everlasting to everlasting, is a bit of imagination which proclaims the insanity of the universe. According to this theory man's conception and idealization of moral values are not only fancies utterly strange to the general scheme of things, but are a discredit to those omnipotent chemical processes which are supposed to have produced them.

Two other theories of the individual's state after death closely link themselves with the foregoing: first, the immortality of the parent in his offspring; second, the perpetuation of human values in the life of the race, and not in the individual soul in a world beyond or above the present one. The person who is blessed with issue has transmitted to his offspring all that the past has given him as a human individual and whatever of his own acquired characteristics which had any effect on the reproductive cell which he carried as a trust for the future, and, at death, he ceases to be. He continues to live impersonally as long as his progeny continues to exist in the human family. And all human virtues which

men idealize — wisdom, love, goodness, sacrifice, knowledge, loyalty, and the like — are assets of the race as a whole. They are the contributions of individuals who, while they vanish after death as individuals, are immortalized in the life of the race. Their gifts and all they loved and suffered for in life go to mellow and enrich the life of humanity.

These views present two admitted facts: first, that the individual lives in the life of his offspring, and, second, that what men do lives after them in the life of the race. But so far as they deal with the ultimate significance of human life, they are only slightly more reassuring than the theory of what I have called atomic immortality. They simply postpone the inevitable catastrophe which must in course of time overtake the human race on the earth. If there is no individual immortality, the end of this grand aggregate called the human race must be extinction. Eternal silence must follow all the music of hope, faith, and love. Values and influences are no living entities and cannot exist without personalities. If the individual's life is merely a passing show and he is of the earth earthy, who then is to reap the spiritual harvest of the centuries? So far as man is concerned a universe whose final verdict is the extinction of the human race and whose mode of being is an everlasting succession of shifting phenomena is meaningless.

Another view of man's final destiny, which is a very ancient Oriental hypothesis, is that of the reabsorption of the individual, and, consequently the whole human race, in the Eternal or the All. According to this view God is the only reality. In a mysterious way men arise within the domain of this reality as transient aspects, much like bubbles on the surface of the sea. The 'I am I' in the human individual is a conception of his own, an illusion, and not a substantial entity. So long as he holds this conception, he is in the bondage of error. The idealization of personality or self is the way of mortality. Self must cease to be before the final harmony with the Eternal can be attained. And when that harmony is effected, all the aspirations and virtues which in this life are articulated and manifested in human individuals enter into the being of the Supreme Reality. Then the illusion of a separate human existence ceases with the reabsorption of man by the All. So it is said by the proponents of this view that the hope of personal immortality in man is born of pure egotism. Those who entertain this hope simply think more highly of themselves than they ought to think. Only egotism makes 'this quintessence of dust,' the human individual, think that he is the chief concern of the universe and is fit to live forever as the conscious companion of the Eternal.

The interminable difficulties which this theory presents cannot all be discussed in this chapter. Holding to my thesis that man's hope of life hereafter rests on his devout appreciation of spiritual values in terms of personality, without which neither thought nor virtue is conceivable, I am compelled to say that, notwithstanding its extolling of the Eternal, this view is as barren spiritually as that of the eternal atom. Here the entire drama of human existence seems to be a prolonged 'constitutional exercise' by the Eternal, for no conceivable purpose whatever. For it is impossible for us to think of the Eternal as growing stronger through such activities, or increasing by reabsorbing into Himself that which originally issued out of Himself, or growing more holy by the ecstasies and the agonies of illusioned human beings on the earth. Therefore, this circular reasoning from the lonely Eternal, through the manifold and fearful struggles of the human generations, back to the lonely Eternal, is a comi-tragic bit of theorizing. It renders man a superfluity in the general scheme of things, and the state of the Supreme Being that of melancholy solitude.

There are those also who reject the idea of human immortality because of man's 'littleness' as compared with the staggering vastness of the universe of modern astronomy. It was excusable

in man, they say, when he thought this earth was the center of creation, and that he was the only concern of the creative Power, to assure himself of his own immortality. But now, when the telescope has shattered that theory of the universe and revealed millions of systems immeasurably greater than ours, what is man that the Ruler of the Universe should be mindful of him? Let not this little creature think more highly of himself than he ought to think. His being or non-being is of no material significance amid the interplay of cosmic forces.

I do not pretend to know what God's ultimate purpose in creation is, nor am I unmindful of the fact that the revelations of modern astronomy compel a revaluation of man's views of himself, of the universe, and of God. But I do assert that such revaluation must reveal higher spiritual values in both man and the universe, else we have again to resolve all things into dust. Mere 'vastness' means nothing. The size of an elephant or a mountain does not render a man valueless, nor does it rob him of his superiority to both. A gaseous star a billion miles in diameter can be of no greater significance in the spiritual realm than a body of similar substance only one foot in diameter. So I hold that if the stellar systems contain no spiritual beings, they are, then, no more worthy of my reverential regard than my doorstep. They are dust, and I am spirit. Nor

do I feel like degrading God by believing that his supreme purpose is to be simply an engineer of rolling masses of gas and star-dust, building and destroying, and building them again, from everlasting to everlasting.

Thus I find that any theory of man's state after death, which rejects the survival of his personality, involves greater difficulties than the theory of survival does. It renders all being purposeless. Only the survival of man as a conscious spiritual being affirms a purpose worthy of the universe. The fact that we do not know what the hereafter is like is no sufficient reason for us to conclude that all is dust, and to dust it must return. If it is difficult to imagine human beings beginning a new series of spiritual existence after death, transcending the biological, it is infinitely more difficult to believe that the end of all human evolution on this planet is a leap into the darkness followed by eternal silence.

Faith, hope, and love are not only prospective spiritual assets; they are the life centers of our true being here and now. All our science and philosophy, with their inventions and applications to our life, individual, domestic, and social, are converted into human values only through the agency of faith, hope, and love. Whenever and wherever these forces cease to operate, whether in the life of an individual

or of society, all other agencies become instrumentalities of destruction, pain, and sorrow. And it is faith, hope, and love, so elusive to experimental science, yet closer to our being than hands and feet, which speak to us of eternal spiritual values and of continued human existence after death. They are real and safe guides, more worthy to be trusted than visionless materialism and faithless agnosticism. They fashion our speech when we speak of father, mother, husband, wife, parent, child, brother, sister, friend, and whatsoever is dearest and holiest in the inner and outer spheres of our being. When sorrows overtake us, when those dearest to us pass beyond our physical seeing and leave a chasm between them and us, hope, faith, and love bridge that chasm and assure us of the unbroken unity of the seen and the unseen.

One of the tenderest, sweetest, and sanest expressions of the hope of immortality in literature, and which most strikingly illustrates the general thought of this chapter, was given by Ernest Renan upon the death of his sister Henrietta.

'God,' said this great French thinker, 'will not suffer his saints to see corruption. Oh, heart, whose flame of tender love was never quenched! Oh, brain, once throbbing with the purest thought! Oh, lovely eyes, shining with holy light! Oh, slender hands so often clasped in mine! — I shudder when

I think that you are dust. All things here are but types and shadows. The immortal element in every soul is that which binds it to the Infinite, and man lives forever in God's memory. There, my beloved Henrietta, forever radiant, forever sinless, lives a thousand times more truly than she ever lived in those dark years when she was striving in her weakness to build up her spiritual personality, when she set her face steadily toward the perfect life, though the world misunderstood her. May her memory be to us a precious confirmation of these eternal truths whereof every virtuous life bears record. For myself, I have never doubted the reality of moral law, but now I see clearly that the logical order of the universe would be inverted, were such lives as hers designed to mock us.'

I feel that Renan spoke the final word of the hope of immortality in his saying that 'the logical order of the universe would be inverted, were such lives as hers designed to mock us.' This is my faith which I preach to others with my whole heart. Whenever it is my solemn and sacred duty to stand by an open grave into which a dear one is lowered, I follow the words, 'Earth to earth, dust to dust, ashes to ashes' — which pertain to the body — with the as true words, 'Life to life, spirit to spirit, love to love' which pertain to the soul.

What God gives us He gives forever. With Him

Life is ever king of death,
And love can never lose its own.

I can think of no nobler expression of this faith than a prayer by James Martineau, with which I will close this chapter.

'We seem to give him back to thee, dear God, who gavest him to us. Yet, as thou didst not lose him in giving, so we have not lost him by his return. Not as the world giveth giveth thou, O Lover of Souls! What Thou givest, Thou takest not away. For what is thine is ours always, if we are Thine. And life is eternal; and love is immortal; and earth is only a horizon; and a horizon is nothing save the limit of our sight. Lift us up, strong Son of God, that we may see farther; cleanse our eyes that we may see more clearly; draw us closer to Thyself that we may know ourselves nearer to our beloved who are with Thee. Prepare us for that happy place, that where they are and Thou art, we may be. Amen.'

CHAPTER XIX

SEVEN DAYS WITH GOD

In the present work my purpose has been to present, in the light of modern knowledge and in view of the needs of our own time, an idea that is as old as civilization; namely, that a Godless world must inevitably be a sad world. I have not meant to present the idea of God as a rigid dogma of the Christian Church or any other, but as the spiritual reality back of all phenomena and the life behind all activity. To me God is the Parent-Life, and therefore, the Father and ever-present Friend of all the souls that seek Him. He is the God of the Christians, but not a Christian God; the God of the Jews, but not a Jewish God; the God of the Brahmans, but not a Brahman God; the God of the Mohammedans, but not a Mohammedan God. He is the Self-Caused, the Absolute Reality, from whom all being draws its life and all souls derive their inspiration and their peace. The way to Him is not limited to any one form of worship, nor to the act of worship alone. True knowledge, sound morality, love of the beautiful, devotion in whatever form to the betterment of human life, are all of them the allies of worship and avenues of approach to

Him who is truth and goodness and beauty and love.

The fact that this book — and every similar book — lays the greatest stress on worship and prayer as the chief way to God, is not born from a desire to make the purely devotional and mystical practices crowd out of our life what we call the 'practical' interests; nor is there any valid reason why they should. The strong tendency toward such emphasis is a response to the imperative first demands of the human soul, which no age has been able to ignore without inviting disaster upon itself. Worship in all its helpful forms seems to constitute the soul's home life. Like the home influences, it is the chief fashioner of character. In the act of worship and prayer, the soul is at home with its Father-Mother God, fitting itself for the duties and responsibilities of life. It is also at home for rest and recuperation in an atmosphere of love and peace. And just as 'there is no place like home,' no other human experience can be so beneficial to the soul as true worship is. It deals with the essence of our being, which diffuses itself through all our activities.

I have attempted to show also, in the early chapters of this work, the incorrectness of the assertion that the Eastern mind is spiritual, and the Western mind is not. I have admitted — as I believe every

student of the subject must admit — that the Eastern mind, chiefly for historical reasons, has been the discoverer of the great spiritual truths in the possession of man, and that it is more deeply grounded in those truths than the Western mind is. But I have found no real reason to believe that the Western mind is without its rich spiritual heritage which it derives from the same Divine Source. So it has seemed to me that the stigmatization of this mind as unspiritual is not wholly just, and have tried to combat it because of its baleful effect on millions of Westerners who seem to be convinced of its truth. They seem to have lost confidence in their own spiritual endowments and to say, 'It's no use trying; ours is purely a commercial mind.' They forget the saying of Him who knew the deepest secret of the spiritual life: 'He that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.'

No, the West is not so barren spiritually, but is still in its youth. It is now bewildered by an experiment which long ago the old East weighed in the balance and found wanting. It is the division of life into two spheres, the one spiritual, the other secular; the one belonging to God, the other to 'Cæsar.' This theory does not 'work,' because in its deepest being the soul knows no other sovereign but God. It realizes that a divided allegiance here will wreck its fortunes. This the West is learning,

'with painful steps and slow.' Perhaps it has not yet doubted far enough to know that doubt is medicine, but faith is food. I am strongly inclined to believe that in course of time it will come to this conclusion, with cheerful humility. It is bound, if it lives long enough to take it to heart, that it cannot serve both God and mammon.

But if this end is to be attained, then religion must be more than a partial interest in life — more than a matter of convenience. If, as human experience has amply proved, religion is the soul's bond of union with the Over-Soul, then it must be placed first on the programme of life as the motive power of all its activities. The seven days of every week, in whatever walk of life, must be lived with God. A mighty task, this is. Nature never faced it before man stood erect and said to himself, 'I am I.' It is *his* task, and it proclaims his greatness.

The fact that we are creative agents, that we are forever striving to refashion the world according to our ideals, that we long for a glimpse of the Unseen, that we pray for greater powers and a fuller life, and bridge the chasm of death with the hope of immortality — this great fact clearly indicates that we are one with the Supreme Person and sharers of his divine nature. We must not lose ourselves among things; for we are souls — 'Ye are gods,' quotes Jesus, 'and all of you sons of the Most High.'

He who has this faith in him 'purifieth himself as He is pure.'

Civilization is a spiritual enterprise. There can be no such thing as a material civilization; materialism is barbarism. Religion is the heart of civilization, as it is man's noblest thought and sentiment. And I speak of religion, not as an exclusive creed nor the insignia of a sect, but as life in which love for God and man is the controlling and guiding power. Creeds, even at their best, are but transient forms, and sects are mere experimental stations. Like tribal life, they are the beginnings of a larger fellowship. Spiritual truth is like sunlight: it cannot be imprisoned in a sectarian dungeon. Religion is the light which 'lighteth every man that cometh into the world.' So religion, as love for God and man, energizing through all the activities of life, is the heart of true civilization. Without it, vast means of communication and great cities may be the highways of irresponsible adventurers and dens of thieves.

Does not the disquietude of our own time confirm this statement? Who are the men and the women whom we fear among our 'fellow citizens'? Those who have the love of God and man at heart and whose deepest motive is to do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with God? Are the disturbers of the world's peace and polluters of the

springs of its life those who begin each day with 'Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer'? Obviously no! Whatever individual failures there may be among them, as a class such persons are the centers of society's life. They grumble the least and hope the most; they pray and labor for the triumph of love and truth and justice and peace, because to them those are the eternal realities; they have the least fear when clouds and darkness overshadow the world, because to them the foundation of God standeth sure; they accept life as an opportunity for spiritual development and for good doing, and face death with the conquering hope that as God lives we shall live also. Out of this class have come the vast majority of the renewers and strengtheners of human life, from Moses and Isaiah to Lincoln and Phillips Brooks. Notwithstanding all the errors and cruelties that have been committed in its name, religion has been the greatest power for good in history. It is highly doubtful whether a great benefactor of the human race has ever arisen in an irreligious family, say after the third generation — after such a family has spent its inherited spiritual capital.

The call of religion in us is the lifting urge of our truest life. Let us not be disobedient to the heavenly vision. Let us endeavor to realize it even in

our humblest tasks, and make it establish and sanction and bless the work of our hands. Give worship, meditation, and prayer an honored place and a conscientious regularity in the plan of life. Those who desert the institutions of religion with the idea that they can worship 'anywhere and any time' are sure, in the end, to worship nowhere and at no time: just as what 'everybody knows,' no one seems to know. Like any other great idea, the religious idea requires that it be embodied in an institution and put to work. It is never meant to exhaust itself in spasmodic inward brooding, 'anywhere,' but to be applied to the machinery of life. And this requires fellowship, loyalty, service, and sacrifice.

Hence the Church, our first and greatest religious institution. The Church is not and never was perfect. No human institution can be perfect until humanity is perfect. No Church can be better than its members, as no State can be better than the citizens of which it is composed. The Church has been justly censured for what one might call her retrogressive conservatism. In her anxiety to stand against destructive religious criticism, she has often stood against constructive criticism. She has often forgotten that her sole function in the world is that of the teacher and inspirer, and not the detective and the judge; that she is to make clear the distinction between good and evil — the constructive

and the destructive forces in human life — and not to render retributive verdicts in matters of pure intellectual speculation. As it was in the beginning, is now, the line of cleavage between men is to be found, not in the realm of theory, important as this may be, but in the realm of life. 'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who doeth the will of my Father, who is in heaven.' He who *does* the will *knows* the doctrine, and no one can exclude him from the Church of the Spirit.

Notwithstanding all this, however, the Church has always stood in history — and it stands to-day — as the representative of man's highest ideals and his noblest effort to

> Move upward, working out the beast,
> And let the ape and tiger die.

The Church, like the home and the State, has not come into being by a mere accident, but as a vital necessity. The spirit of religion has formed this supreme human institution, the Church, as life forms the organism through which it functions. And notwithstanding its faults, and all the slurs cast upon it by the heedless, who always find it easier to desert any institution rather than to labor to improve it, the Church remains the greatest power for good in the world. It is the home of our

highest ideals; in it are the prophet and the teacher and the social worker; it is the only public institution in which the whole family is anchored; it is all-embracing in its sympathy — no human interest is a stranger to it; it is never an exclusive club, even in its worst form; the rich and the poor, the high and the humble, the learned and the ignorant, all have access to its altar. And wherever any particular Church violates this principle, it places itself under universal condemnation. It ceases to be the house of God, and a 'house of prayer for all people.' At the altar of the Church our childhood is consecrated, our marriage solemnized, and the last sacred rites administered over our dead. Within its walls and its fellowship, we open our hearts to God and lay before Him our hopes, our fears, our joys, our sorrows, and ask for his all-embracing blessing upon us. We lay our talents before Him and ask Him to strengthen and send us forth to place those talents at the service of our fellow men. In sum, the Church stands for all that we love and reverence in this world, and as the symbol of all that we hope for in the world to come.

Now, you who would desert the Church and would 'worship anywhere' or nowhere, what substitute would you offer for such an institution? A literary society, a metaphysical society, a professional club, a 'mutual improvement' association (what-

ever this may mean), a book-review circle, or what? And you who would 'rather spend Sunday in the woods,' on the plea that 'the Sabbath was made for man,' have you ever stopped to ask *what man himself was made for?* Was he made to work six days in the week and to picnic on Sunday? Was he made to reduce his life to a short walk between the yoke and the manger, and thus disown his spiritual superiority to the beasts that perish? It is indeed a cause for dismay to think how many hundreds of thousands smother the aspirations of their souls in a Sunday newspaper and fritter away their capacity for ideals by feasting their eyes on pictures of 'Mutt and Jeff.' Such diversions may claim some moments of our time in this harried life of ours, but they can hardly be considered a fit substitute for what the Church has to give. They can scarcely be accepted as suitable nourishment for the minds of those whose ambition and duty it is to build up the ideal home institution, the ideal State, and that social order in which the true and the just exercise controlling power.

I do not wish for a moment to imply that religion never can be found outside the Church. There are the few 'Once-born' in every race and nation who have succeeded in reaching the springs of the spirit without this medium, but they are very few. Among the rank and file of human beings, those

who are 'getting' religion outside the Church are, in the vast majority, the unproductive consumers of the bread of the Church's altar. *Indirectly* they feed on the Church's bounty, without helping to increase the spiritual output. They are much like those others who have no use for educational institutions because they have been able to 'educate themselves' by their 'diligent reading of books,' but who seem to overlook the fact that for those institutions, they could have had no books to read.

Crude, indeed, have been some of the means the Church has employed in her teachings; yet these have been vastly outweighed by the trueness of her fundamental instinct for spiritual values, and her desire to attach men to those ideals without which our life would be a thirsty desert. I will say of the Church what a certain statesman said of America: 'My country, right or wrong; when she is right, to keep her right; when she is wrong, to make her right.'

Finally I wish to recall here very briefly some of my religious experiences as a youth, during Holy Week, in the Greek Orthodox Church, the ancient Christian fold into which I was born. It was the memory of those experiences which first suggested to me the title of this book. Some of those practices are traditional; they seem to point to a pre-Christian origin, and are variously observed in the

different communities, while others are canonical and are observed in the same manner by all the faithful Orthodox. You may, if you wish, call some of those observances animistic and superstitious. I shall not quarrel with you; for my concern here is not with the form, but with the substance and the purpose. I simply wish to give an example of the idea I have been trying to make clear, namely, that the purpose of the Church, be its vision dim or clear, has been to interpret human life, with all its interests, in spiritual terms.

On Monday of Holy Week we began our ceremonial purification of our life and our habitation by cleaning house. The home must be prepared for the invisible Guest; it must be made fit to symbolize the higher and holier home of the soul. On Tuesday we gave similar attention to our garments, the more immediate needs and comforts of our bodies. They are gifts from Him whose are all the trees of the forest and 'the flocks on a thousand hills.' We must be prepared in wedding garments, as it were, to meet the Bridegroom at dawn on Resurrection Day. Wednesday we devoted to the ceremonial cleansing of the body, the temple of God in which his spirit dwelt. Its washing and grooming symbolized for us the consecration of the body to God, and reminded us of the precept, 'Let not sin reign in your mortal body . . . but present yourselves unto

God, . . . and your members as instruments of righteousness.'

On Thursday we turned our vision inward; we gave ourselves to penitential self-examination and to confession. It was the cleansing of the 'inside of the cup,' and the effort to realize our deep spiritual needs. We were to grant as well as to ask forgiveness, and to arm the soul with the spiritual weapons against all the evil powers, within and without. Friday was the Day of Sorrow. It brought to mind the agony of Calvary and the anguish of the sorrowing Mother. Our food on that day consisted of herbs seasoned with vinegar — the drink which was given the Christ on the cross. We were reminded that the sorrows of life must be met with faith and hope and trustful endurance: that suffering must needs come, but even here God is never absent from us; out of our trials we shall rise into newness of life, if our faith in Him remains unshaken. The dawn was approaching; Saturday was the Day of Light. The gloom of Calvary was retreating, and the dawn of the Resurrection advancing. We looked forward to the Easter morn which symbolized the triumph of light over darkness and of life over death. 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in the grave' is the confident cry of man. Easter Sunday dawned upon us as a day of liberation from doubt and fear and sorrow. The preparations of the week found their

full significance in the question, 'Why seek ye the living among the dead?'

Is not the thought which these practices represent inclusive of all that our life has to do with — our homes, our possessions, our inward trials and triumphs, and our dream of destiny? We may not be able to practice this thought to-day through just such forms, but is that a sufficient reason for neglecting it altogether? Are we not better fitted to live and to serve when we have the conviction that even our garments and our food partake of the sacredness of our personality? We are not bound to any one form of worship, nor has the Church ever meant to limit spiritual experience to one hour on Sunday. Such 'regular' seasons of collective worship are meant to train us for daily worship and prayer, and to enlarge our capacity for the ideals of justice, mercy, and love, which shall guide us in dealing with our fellow men. And before we rebel blindly against symbols, let us remember that our language, our art, our poetry, and our insignia of whatever description, are all symbols. Symbols are our only means of expressing our perception of the ever-elusive reality of our being.

It is our duty and our privilege to use our talents for the promotion of our own good and the good of others, in our own way. Freedom is an essential condition for creative action, and our theories are

our feelers through which we search for reality. But let us never allow ourselves to forget that these and all other means, both spiritual and material, are the tools of life's central purpose. The seat of authority is within. 'As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.' The chief fashioner of life's purpose in us is our view of life's ultimate significance. If this view is that we are dust, and to dust we must return, then we are unable to see in all our endeavors but labor and sorrow. But if our conviction is that we are sharers of the divine nature of the Infinite, and fellow travelers toward a higher destiny, then our world acquires for us a perpetual newness of life, and our activities become promoters of the ministry of love and the arts of peace.

THE END

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SEVEN DAYS WITH GOD

By

ABRAHAM MITRIE RIHBANY

Author of 'The Syrian Christ,'
'Wise Men from the East and from the West,' etc.

In these days of spiritual questioning and unrest this book will bring hope and inspiration to thousands of readers, for Dr. Rihbany shows that notwithstanding all the noise and din of our machinery, the things which give us real hold on life and make it seem worth while are the spiritual realities. Therefore our real 'business' is with God, even if we may not always know it. This world is not divided between God and Cæsar. The life of the soul is a unity; it is either loyal to God or not loyal.

Among the many other subjects discussed are the religious practices of the East and the West, the relation of science and religion, prayer, immortality, etc. The closing chapter, 'Seven Days with God,' sums up the entire message of this important work. Civilization is a spiritual and not a material enterprize; materialism is barbarism. So if civilization is to endure, God must be found and served in the office, the factory, and the market-place as well as in the church.

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